NATION

Al jet's fuel control switch was replaced in 2024

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BUSINESS

Investors become richer by Rs 12.10L cr as markets rally

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SPORTS

Broadcasters may sue PCB over T20WC boycott

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SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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Al, IndiGo planes collide at Mumbai airport

MOSCOW, 3 FEB

An Air India aircraft and an IndiGo plane carrying passengers were involved in a ground collision at Mumbai airport on Tuesday, prompting an inquiry by the aviation regulator.

According to reports, Air India flight AI2732, bound for Coimbatore, was pushing back from the bay when it made contact with IndiGo flight 6E791, which had arrived from Hyderabad and was taxiing. No injuries were reported in the incident.

Passengers from both aircraft were safely deboarded and alternative travel arrangements were being made. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation has ordered an investigation to determine the circumstances behind ground collision, reports said. — *PTI*

VHP wants DNA tests to detect Bangladeshis

GUWAHATI, 3 FEB

VHP president Praveen Togadia on Tuesday demanded DNA tests to identify illegal Bangladeshis in Assam, using the 1951 voters' list as the base.

Togadia, the president of the Antarrashtriya Hindu Parishad (AHP), maintained that if the government has the will all illegal immigrants can be detected. "We demand that DNA tests be conducted to determine citizenship eligibility for 'Miyas.' The 1951 voters' list is available. Let the ancestry be traced on its basis, and DNAs matched," he said, addressing a press conference. Togadia said the tests take only two or three hours, and there is no shortage of machines, including portable ones, for conducting that. — *PTI*

Akhilesh alleges EC, BJP are removing PDA voters in UP

LUCKNOW, 3 FEB

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav has accused the Election Commission of India of teaming with the BJP to delete PDA voters' names from electoral rolls through Form-7. Addressing the press, Yadav stated, "The ECI has teamed up with the BJP and made a plan to delete the names of PDA voters." He alleged an IAS officer in the Chief Minister's office is pressing officials to remove PDA votes, claiming the officer might be acting on orders.

The former chief minister coined the PDA, which represents a coalition of backward groups (Pichhda), Dalits, minorities (Alpsankhyak). Yadav also claimed that after poor 2024 election results, the BJP plans to split votes through targeted electoral roll revisions. —*PTI*

After a year of Prez rule, Manipur gets CM & DyCM

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

Y Khemchand Singh was elected leader of the BJP legislature party in Manipur on Tuesday, paving the way for the formation of a popular government in the northeastern state with him as chief minister. Nemcha Kipgen, a woman Kuki leader and former minister, is expected to be deputy chief minister, sources said.

The election took place at a BJP MLAs' meeting at the party headquarters, attended by all legislators except two who were unwell. Former chief minister N Biren Singh, Assembly Speaker Satyabrata Singh, BJP state president A Sharda Devi, central observer Tarun Chugh and northeast in-charge Sambit Patra were also present.

The meeting comes ahead of the expiry of the second spell of President's rule on 12 February. Manipur has been under central rule since 13 February, 2025, after the BJP-led government resigned amid ethnic violence between the Meitei and Kuki communities. The 60-member Assembly, with tenure until 2027, was put under suspended animation.

Currently, the BJP has 37 MLAs in Manipur, including five JD(U) defectors. NDA allies NPP and NPF hold six and five seats respectively, while other parties and Independents account for the remainder.

Over recent months, the BJP central leadership held discussions with Meitei and Kuki MLAs, allies, and Independents to assess the political climate for government formation. The state had witnessed ethnic violence from May 2023, sparked by a Tribal Solidarity March, leaving at least 260 dead and thousands displaced. —*PTI*

Agri sector safe: Govt on US deal

Fears loom over cheap US products in India

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

India has built safeguards for sensitive agriculture and dairy sectors in its concessions to the US, following Washington's decision to cut tariffs on Indian goods, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said on Monday.

The move, seen as a boost for labour-intensive exports such as apparel, footwear, and jewellery, follows US President Donald Trump's announcement reducing tariffs on Indian goods from 50 per cent to 18 per cent in exchange for India lowering trade barriers and halting Russian oil imports in favour of US and Venezuelan supplies.

Goyal said a joint statement detailing the pact would be issued shortly. The Opposition criticised the government for compromising farmers' interests. The new 18 per cent levy restores India's price advantage over competitors such as Vietnam and Bangladesh, offering relief to exporters previously hit by punitive US tariffs.

The agreement is expected to benefit textiles, plastics, apparel, home décor, leather, footwear, gems, jewellery, organic chemicals, rubber, machinery, and aircraft. While some import duties will drop immediately, others will be phased out or quota-based. Sensitive sectors, including dairy, rice, wheat, meat, poultry, cereals, GM foods, soymeal, and maize, remain protected.

Meanwhile, The Samyukta Kisan Morcha, an umbrella body of various farmer unions, slammed the government accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi of "shamelessly bowing to the dictates of Trump".

The farmers' body claimed the deal will allow the US to flood the Indian markets with highly subsidised agricultural products, destroying the country's farm sector. It said US has 18.8 lakh farmers according to a 2024 survey, compared to 14.65 crore operational holdings in India as per the agricultural census of 2015. Highlighting that 48 per cent of the workforce and 65 per cent of the population depend on agriculture and allied sectors. It called for a campaign against the government from 4 to 11 February and announced a general strike on 12 February. —*PTI*

EAM to meet Rubio in US for critical minerals

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will meet US Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Washington on Tuesday, days after President Donald Trump announced a trade deal with India. The meeting at the US Department of State comes ahead of the inaugural Critical Minerals Ministerial convened by Rubio on Wednesday. Jaishankar, visiting the US from February 2–4, will also hold talks with senior members of the US administration. Reports indicate Pakistan has not been invited to the high-level summit, while India is set to play a key role.

PM compromised, sold India: Oppn

Oppn links trade deal to Adani & Epstein

Congress MPs protest at the Parliament complex against the suspension of eight MPs and US trade deal in New Delhi on Monday—*PTI*

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

Parliament witnessed stormy scenes on Tuesday as opposition MPs protested and staged walkouts over the Indo-US trade deal, accusing the government of bypassing Parliament and compromising the interests of Indian farmers.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had yielded to US pressure to finalise the agreement, claiming it "sold out" farmers' hard work. He further alleged that the Prime Minister had been compromised due to two pressure points over him.

Asked what kind of pressure he was referring to, Gandhi said there is a case against industrialist Gautam Adani in the US and a lot more is to come in the Epstein files matter.

The Epstein files refer to thousands of pages of documents related to investigations into sex trafficking by financier Jeffrey Epstein.

In the Lok Sabha, seven Congress MPs — Gurjeet Singh Aujla, Hibi Eden, C Kiran Kumar Reddy, Amarinder Singh Raja Warring, Manickam Tagore, Prashant Padole and Dean Kuriakose — along with CPI-M MP S Venkatesan, were suspended for the remainder of the Budget Session, which ends on 2 April. The suspensions followed scenes in which papers were torn and thrown towards the Chair. Rahul Gandhi was also denied permission to cite excerpts from former Army chief MM Naravane's unpublished memoir on the 2020 India-China standoff.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said Modi had "completely surrendered" to then US President Donald Trump.

CPI-M's John Brittas questioned on X whether Parliament had become "inferior to Elon Musk's platform", while Tharoor sought clarity on claims that India would buy USD 500 billion worth of US goods, calling the figure unrealistic given India's total import bill of about USD 700 billion. —*PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3 & 5

> **There's a case against Adani in US courts. They are not targeting Adani, they are targeting PM Modi's financial structure. The second thing is there is still a lot to be revealed from the Epstein files which the nation wants to know. The US has not released it till now and there is pressure on PM over this. The case on Adani is like a case on PM because he is the financial structure behind PM and the BJP. So these are two pressure points**
> -Rahul Gandhi, Congress leader

Exit India: SC scolds WhatsApp over privacy

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

The Supreme Court on Tuesday strongly criticised Meta Platforms Inc and WhatsApp over their data-sharing practices, warning that companies cannot "play with the right to privacy of citizens" under the guise of consent or market choice, and said it would pass an interim order on 9 February.

If you can't follow our Constitution, leave India. We won't allow citizens' privacy to be compromised, the bench said.

Hearing appeals by the tech giants against a Competition Commission of India (CCI) order imposing a Rs 213.14 crore penalty over WhatsApp's privacy policy, a bench led by

Chief Justice Surya Kant said Indian users' data could not be treated as a transferable commercial asset.

The bench also flagged concerns over monopoly and alleged exploitation of "silent customers" who are unorganised, digitally dependent and unaware of complex data policies.

"What is the choice? You have a complete monopoly in the market," the court said, questioning the effectiveness of WhatsApp's opt-out mechanism and the intelligibility of its privacy policy for economically vulnerable users.

The court noted that while the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal had earlier set aside a five-year ban on data sharing for advertising, it had retained the Rs 213-crore penalty and extended safeguards to all forms of data use. There was also a cross-appeal by the CCI about sharing of user data for advertising purposes, which the NCLAT allowed after ruling there was no 'abuse of power' by the company.

At one point, the CJI warned of restraining the platforms from sharing "even a single piece of information" unless an undertaking was filed. Senior advocates Mukul Rohatgi and Akhil Sibal argued that data sharing was consent-based and messages were end-to-end encrypted.

The court ordered the Ministry of Electronics and IT to be impleaded and underscored the need for stricter judicial oversight of data monetisation. —*PTI*

BJP-JD(S) go on overnight dharna in K'taka Assembly

BENGALURU, 3 FEB

BJP and its ally JD(S) on Tuesday launched an overnight agitation in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly demanding state Excise Minister R B Timmapur's resignation over allegations of corruption in his department.

The BJP alleged widespread corruption in the Excise Department, and bribe is demanded to issue liquor licences. Opposition leader R Ashoka charged that the alleged scam is to the tune of Rs 6,000 crore. He also alleged that the money was being used by the ruling Congress to fund the party in the poll-bound states.

Meanwhile, Legislative Council witnessed an uproar over the derogatory remarks made by Congress MLC Naseer Ahmed against Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Ahmed made the remarks on Monday, with BJP demanding an apology. The din continued on Tuesday as well, with BJP raising slogans "Naseer Ahmed Dhikara (Down Naseer Ahmed)". — *PTI*

UP WOMAN ALLEGEDLY FAKES BABY'S FALL TO GET DRAIN CLEANED

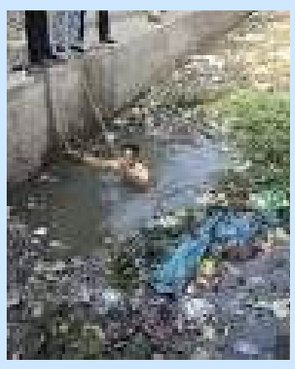
MEERUT, 3 FEB

A woman in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, allegedly faked her baby's fall into a clogged drain to force authorities to clean it, triggering widespread debate on social media.

Acting on her complaint, police and municipal teams rushed to the spot and launched a three-hour rescue operation. Heavy machinery was deployed to remove garbage and sludge, but no child was found

Videos and photographs showing the drain before and after the clean-up went viral online. Social media users later claimed the complaint was false, though police have not confirmed the allegation or said whether any action will be taken.

—*Agencies*



IN PUSHKAR

2 UK tourists told to leave India over Palestine stickers

JAIPUR, 3 FEB

The Rajasthan Police's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has issued "leave India" notices to two British nationals for allegedly pasting political stickers in public places in Pushkar, officials said on Monday.

The stickers contained messages like 'Free Palestine, Boycott Israel.'

The action came after reports received on 21 January about stickers about the Israel-Palestine conflict appearing at multiple locations. A CID team traced it to the two foreigners.

Police said the two were in India on tourist visas. The CID found that their actions amounted to a violation of visa conditions, which prohibit engagement in political activities. Additional Superintendent of Police (CID) Rajesh Meena said that engaging in activities that show disrespect towards other countries while staying in India breaches visa norms.

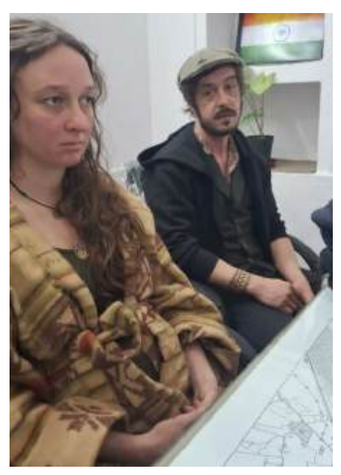
- The action came after reports received on 21 January about stickers about the Israel-Palestine conflict appearing at multiple locations.

He said the notices were issued under provisions of the Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025, directing the two to leave the country.

Pushkar attracts a large number of foreign tourists every year, including many from Israel.

The officials said no formal complaints were received from tourists in connection with the stickers. After the CID's intervention, the stickers were removed from public places.

Police also conducted checks in areas frequented by foreign tourists to ensure no similar material was displayed. — *PTI*



Make DPR for new 800m flyover at Iblur: GBA Chief

BENGALURU, 3 FEB

Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) Chief Maheswar Rao has directed officials to prepare a blueprint and Detailed Project Report (DPR) for an 800m flyover at Iblur Junction on Outer Ring Road (ORR) in the City to reduce congestion. Details about the cost, model and timeline are to be included in the documents. He made the announcement on X on Tuesday after conducting a join inspection. He also said that the double decker road from Central Silk Board to Ragigudda would be completed by the by the end of February. Other announcements included widening areas near Kodibisanahalli, introducing pay-and-park near New Horizon Metro and complete a 2 km footpath near Iblur Metro Station. *—SALAR NEWS*

PHOTO: PTI

Duniya Vijay's 'Landlord' gets tax exemption

BENGALURU, 3 FEB

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has directed authorities to provide tax exemption to the recently released Kannada film 'Landlord', which highlights themes of social inequality and caste-based exploitation. In a social media post, he expressed hope that this decision will encourage more films addressing social issues. The CM said, "I have instructed the concerned authorities to grant tax exemption to the film 'Landlord', starring Duniya Vijay, which is based on themes of social inequality and caste-based exploitation." He emphasised cinema's role in conveying meaningful messages and shaping public opinion, adding, "When films address social concerns, it is our moral responsibility as a government to support such efforts." The film, directed by Jadeshaa K Hampi, was released in theatres on 23 January, 2026. *—PTI*

Mysuru-Ajmer Express to have more trips for Holi

BENGALURU, 3 FEB

South Western Railway has announced the extension of the Mysuru-Ajmer-Mysuru Express Special to manage additional passenger demand during the upcoming Holi and summer season. The Mysuru Division, based in Hubballi, stated the Railway Board decided to run Train number 06281/06282 for 17 extra trips with existing stops, timings, fare, and coaches. The extension includes a service from Ajmer to Madar Junction over North Western Railway. The trains will operate on selected Saturdays and Mondays from February to June 2026, with revised timings and halts at key stations including Vasai Road, Surat, Vadodara, Ratlam, Mandasor, Nimach, Chittaurgarh, Bhilwara, Bijainagar, Nasirabad, Ajmer, and Madar Junction. The move aims to clear the extra rush during the festive and holiday seasons. *—PTI*

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Cong moves resolution against G RAM G scheme

Amid BJP uproar, Cong urges Centre to reinstate MGNREGA

BENGALURU, 3 FEB

The Congress government moved a resolution in the Legislative Assembly urging the Centre to immediately repeal the new rural employment legislation VB-G RAM G Act and reinstate the MGNREGA in its original form, amid strong objections from opposition BJP.

The resolution, moved by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, said the House "strongly opposes" the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G Act) and said that it is "detrimental to the basic ideals of federalism and the right to livelihood of the rural people".

BJP members, led by Leader of Opposition R Ashoka, immediately took strong objection. "Don't say the House opposes, say the Congress government opposes. Don't make us party to this."

However, Siddaramaiah, repeatedly said "this House", continued reading the resolution. This angered the Opposition members. Some even accused the Congress of "loot" under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), as Congress members hit back, leading to chaos.

BJP leader R Ashoka in the Assembly on Tuesday *—SALAR*

> **The Karnataka government has (now) passed 19 resolutions against the Central government, which no other state has done.**
> —R Ashoka, Leader of Opposition

The resolution said that state governments were now made to bear 40 per cent of the cost, a decision "unilaterally" made by the Centre. This was against federalism and "a clear violation of Articles 258 and 280 of the Constitution," it said.

Despite being India's second-highest tax contributor, Karnataka faces an unreasonable fiscal burden. Its tax share has declined from 4.71 per cent (14th Financial Commission) to 3.64 per cent (15th Financial Commission). While the 16th Financial Commission proposed a slight increase to 4.131 per cent, this remains 14.1 per cent lower than the 14th FC recommendation, the resolution said. Therefore, the 40 per cent burden is unreasonable.

Siddaramaiah noted that Karnataka had 71.18 lakh rural labourers, more than 51 per cent of whom are women. Siddaramaiah described the V-B G RAM G as "deadly for villages" and alleged the scheme was inspired by "Manusmriti," claiming it was not intended to financially empower women, Dalits, tribals and small farmers.

Meanwhile, Ashoka showed three pen drives in the House, purportedly containing audio evidence to substantiate his allegation against Excise Minister RB Timmapur and demanded his resignation over the alleged Rs 6,000 crore scam.

Later, Chalavadi Narayanaswamy, LoP in the Legislative Council, wrote to a committee under the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and sought action against the Congress' ads on the VB-G RAM G. *—PTI*

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah during a heated Assemebly session on Tuesday *—SALAR*

KEY POINTS OF THE RESOLUTION:

- The State government will have to bear 40% of the cost, a burden given the current tax devolution.
- The State government would have to bear the cost of 50 of the 125 annual work days, violating Articles 258 and 280 of the Constitution.
- Only Centre-selected Gram Panchayats will have the scheme, attacking the Right to Employment.

GST Bachao Utsav: Priyank flays US deal

BENGALURU, 3 FEB

Minister for Electronics Priyank Kharge slammed the India-US trade deal, saying it was nothing but "GST Bachao Utsav". He noted that while Washington has reduced tariffs on Indian goods to 18 per cent from the previous 25 percent, New Delhi is buying American goods with a 0 per cent tariff.

"The government of India has become a madhouse. It is nothing but the GST Bachao Utsav, which the government celebrated so much. First you implement high GSTs, then you reduce it after eight years, then you celebrate reduction. Similarly, the US tariff has been reduced to 18 per cent, so you are celebrating a reduction while there is zero tariff on US goods," Kharge said.

On X, he termed it as the deal as anti-farmer. US President Donald Trump had announced that Prime Minister Narendra Modi would buy American farm products at 0 per cent tariffs. India has long limited its imports of agricultural produce through several measures including tariffs to protect local farmers.

This will benefit American farmers first, not Indian farmers, Kharge wrote. "Modi has sacrificed the interests of Indian farmers. This is indeed a historic trade deal. For America."

Meanwhile, Minister MB Patil questioned whether Modi indeed made commitments to not to buy Russian oil, which Trump had claimed was a key to sealing the deal.

"It is good for industries that the tariff has been reduced," the Large and Medium Scale Industries said.

Former chief minister Basavaraj Bommai said Modi has kept India's national interests at the centre of the deal, which will "create new opportunities for farmers, MSMEs, innovators, and skilled professionals". *—Agencies*

CJ ROY DEATH CASE

Action depends on SIT report: HM

BENGALURU, 3 FEB

Home Minister G Parameshwara today said that the SIT probing the death of CJ Roy, founder and chairman of the Confident Group, will record the statements of his family and others, and based on the report, action will be taken.

C J Roy *-PTI*

Roy was found dead at his office here on 30 January, with bullet injuries. He allegedly committed suicide during an Income Tax raid.

"The SIT has begun the probe. They will record the statements of his family and others," Parameshwara told reporters.

Responding to a question about the family claiming that Roy was under pressure from the IT department, he said, "All those things will be known after the investigation is complete."

Regarding Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan writing a letter to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman seeking a judicial inquiry into the death of Roy, the minister said, "I know he (Vijayan) has written a letter. Let's wait and see what they decide. The IT department comes under Nirmala Sitharaman. Whether she will order a judicial probe or any other probe, we don't know. At the state level, we have set up a SIT. They have begun the probe, and based on the report, we will decide." *— PTI*

Pub owner booked after drunk minor falls to death in City

BENGALURU, 3 FEB

The owner and staff of a pub have been booked after allegedly serving alcohol to a 15-year-old boy who later fell from the seventh floor of an apartment building and died, police said. The incident happened on the night of 31 January at an apartment on Dr Vishnuvardhan Road.

The boy's father filed a complaint, and a case has been registered at Rajarajeshwari Nagar police station.

A senior officer stated, "During investigation, it was found that on 31 January, the deceased minor, along with his friends, had consumed alcohol and smoked at the establishment."

The police said the case had been registered under the Juvenile Justice Act and the Karnataka Excise Act for allowing a minor to consume alcohol.

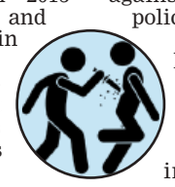
The investigation is ongoing to establish the circumstances of the fatal fall and determine accountability. *—PTI*

Man kills mom's ex over old grudge

BELAGAVI, 3 FEB

A man was murdered in a brutal attack, reportedly over a personal dispute dating back nearly ten years at Belagavi district. The incident occurred on Monday evening in Hulikatti village, Saundatti taluk, where 51-year-old Basappa Hosamani was stabbed at least 16 times by Irrayya Mathapati, aged 32.

Police stated, "We found 16 attacks on Basappa's body."



The victim, from Sadoni village, had eloped with the accused's mother in 2015 when Irrayya was 18, and they later settled in Maharashtra.

The accused had harboured resentment since then and was waiting for Basappa's return.

After the attack, Irrayya reportedly stood with his foot on the body until police arrived, then called and surrendered himself. A murder case has been registered against him at Savadatti police station.

Police believe the long-standing grudge, linked to the elopement, prompted the attack, which involved multiple fatal injuries inflicted with a machete. The incident highlights the enduring impact of past personal conflicts. *—Salar News*

State police seize 1,220 Kerala lottery tickets worth Rs 72,000

MANGALURU, 3 FEB

The State police seized 1,220 Kerala lottery tickets valued at approximately Rs 72,000 that were being transported for illegal resale, officials said on Tuesday.

They were seized by law enforcement personnel, who intercepted a vehicle carrying the tickets on a route from Bandadka in neighbouring Kerala towards Karnataka, police sources said.

According to police, the accused had allegedly purchased the lottery tickets across the Kerala border and was moving them to Sampaje for resale at marked-up prices, officials said.

The practice of transporting and selling lottery tickets from Kerala is banned under the Karnataka Lottery Prohibition Act, and authorities said the seizure was part of ongoing efforts to crack down on the illegal lottery trade. The police detained the person found in possession of the tickets during checks conducted as part of regular surveillance near border areas. *—PTI*

UNBLOCK OUR IDS: GIG WORKERS

Gig and Platform Services Workers Union (GPSIWU), a women-led body, protest in Freedom Park, Bengaluru on Tuesday against arbitrary blocking of accounts by platforms when the workers raise grievances. Women workers are at particular risk of sexual harrasment, they said. When their ID is blocked, they are unable to earn a living. Similar protests were held in Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Delhi *-MOHAMMED ASAD*

AFTER DECEMBER TRIUMPH

KSDL produces record 4,894.77 MT Mysore sandal soap in Jan

BENGALURU, 3 FEB

State-owned KSDL, producers of the famous Mysore sandal soaps has set an all-time production record by manufacturing a total of 4,894.777 metric tonnes of products in January this year, Minister for Large and Medium Industries MB Patil said on Tuesday.

January production comprised of 3,798 tonnes in the soap segment, 941 tonnes in the detergents segment, and 155 tonnes in the cosmetics segment, he said in a statement.

He recalled that Karnataka Soaps and Detergents Limited (KSDL) had earlier achieved record production of 4,735 tonnes in December 2025.

He said extensive measures have been taken to expand markets and strengthen branding in North India and overseas. In addition, a system of continuous, quality-driven production operating across three shifts has been put in place.

The State-owned enterprise currently offers over 45 products, with more to be introduced in the coming days. The company's turnover is targeted to be scaled up to Rs 5,000 crore by 2030, Patil said.

Prashanth, MD, KSDL, stated that the new record production has been achieved using the existing facilities, without recruiting additional staff or procuring any new equipment, and thanked the employees for their efforts. *—PTI*

Owner of rottweiler that mauled B'luru woman booked

BENGALURU, 3 FEB

Police on Tuesday booked the owner of a Rottweiler that allegedly mauled a woman during her morning walk in Bengaluru, causing severe facial and neck injuries.

The incident occurred on January 26 near Teachers Colony in HSR Layout when Shalini Dubey (31), a software professional, stepped out near her home. CCTV footage shows the dog charging at her, knocking her down and biting her repeatedly.

Her family alleged the dog was released without a leash or muzzle. Dubey suffered deep wounds to her face, throat and scalp, required over 80 stitches, and underwent an eight-hour surgery. She remains hospitalised and traumatised, police said. *—PTI*

Menzies Aviation wins 15-year licence at KIA

BENGALURU, 3 FEB

Menzies Aviation has secured a 15-year licence to provide ground handling services here at Kempegowda International Airport (BLR), reinforcing its presence at one of India's busiest aviation hubs, airport officials said on Tuesday.

The licence, awarded by Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), will take effect from 1 April, with operations beginning after regulatory approvals.

The award builds on Menzies Aviation's 15 years at BLR Airport, where it delivers air cargo services for global and domestic carriers. Under the new licence, the company will provide ground handling services across Terminals 1 and 2, covering passenger, ramp and baggage operations, enabling integrated ground and cargo services.

BLR Airport is a key gateway for South Asia and among the country's busiest airports, handling over 43 million passengers annually.

As part of the agreement, Menzies will roll out a local recruitment programme, adding around 1,000 employees over the first three years and expanding its existing cargo workforce of about 1,700 locally.

Menzies will invest more than USD 9.2 million to modernise ground support equipment, including introducing electric GSE as part of its sustainability strategy. *—PTI*

HOW NAXAL INCIDENTS PLUMMETED SINCE 2010

Total arrests since 2019: **7,400**

Total surrendered since 2019: **5,880**

Left Wing Extremism (LWF) incidents in 2010: **1,936**

LWF incidents in 2025: **234; 88%** ↓ from 2010

In 2025: 364 neutralised; 1,022 arrested; **2,337 surrendered**

LWF affected districts in 2018: **126**

LWF affected districts in 2025: **8**

*Govt informs Parliament

India to limit Russian crude purchase: Sources

This is a part of agreement made with US for lower tariffs

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

India will restrict crude oil purchases from Russia as part of an agreement reached with the US in exchange for lower trade tariffs, sources said, adding imports will continue for now by refiners such as Nayara Energy, which have no other alternative source.

US President Donald Trump announced overnight that the US will cut the reciprocal tariff on imports of Indian goods to 18 per cent from 25 per cent under a broader bilateral understanding.

According to him, this came after India agreed to stop buying Russian oil, reduce its tariff and non-tariff barriers against the US, and commit to purchasing an additional USD 500 billion worth of US energy, technology, agricultural products, coal and other goods over time.

The commitment to halt Russian oil purchases removes the additional 25 per cent punitive tariff earlier imposed, effectively lowering the applied US tariff on Indian exports to 18 per cent from 50 per cent, providing substantial relief to Indian exporters.

—FREEPIK

Indian refiners, which became the world's second biggest buyer of Russian oil after it became available at a discount post Moscow's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, will continue to honour the purchase commitments made prior to the announcement but will not place new orders thereafter, three sources with knowledge of the matter said.

While refiners like Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL), Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL) and HPCL-Mittal Energy Ltd (HMEL) had stopped buying oil from Russia soon after the US last year slapped sanctions on Moscow's key exporters, others like Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) will wind down their purchases, they said.

Reliance Industries Ltd, India's biggest buyer, which late last year paused purchases after US sanctions on Rosneft and Lukoil, is also likely to cease purchases after its resumption cargo of 100,000-150,000 barrels is delivered.

The only exception to this rule is likely to be Nayara Energy. Nayara was first sanctioned by the European Union and then by the UK for its Russian links (Rosneft holds 49.13 per cent in Nayara). —*PTI*

TO COUNTER RUSSIA

US to export more farm products to India: US leaders

NEW YORK, 3 FEB

Top American leaders have said the trade deal announced by US President Donald Trump with "close partner" India will make the country export more farm products from America to its massive market, helping counter Russian aggression.

"Congratulations to President Trump for a superb accomplishment on today's trade agreement with India," Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Senator Jim Risch said in a post on X Monday.

He said he is "very glad to learn that the world's oldest and largest democracy has agreed to reduce trade barriers with the United States."

Describing India as a "close partner" of the US, with a prominent diaspora in America, Risch said New Delhi is an integral partner in countering China's "malign influence" in the Indo-Pacific.

"Now, under this new agreement India has pledged to buy American. It will also help the US counter Russian aggression and in its work to bring an end to Russia's war against Ukraine by cutting off India's support of the Russian energy sector," Risch said.

Senator Jim Risch —WIKIPEDIA

US Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins thanked Trump for "once again" delivering for American farmers. "New US-India deal will export more American farm products to India's massive market, lifting prices, and pumping cash into rural America," she said in a post on X.

Rollins said India's growing population is an "important market" for American agricultural products and the deal will go a long way to reducing this deficit. —*PTI*

—SCREENGRAB

420 kg Gandhi statue stolen in Melbourne

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

India on Tuesday strongly condemned the theft of a statue of Mahatma Gandhi at the Australian Indian Community Centre in Melbourne and demanded immediate action to recover it. The bronze statue was allegedly removed from the community centre at Rowville in Melbourne in the early hours of 12 January, according to Australian media. The statue, weighing 420kg, was cut from its base with a grinder, leaving only the feet, according to media reports. The statue was gifted by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and was unveiled by former prime minister Scott Morrison in 2021 as a symbol of the strong ties between India and Australia. —*PTI*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi being garlanded at the NDA Parliamentary party meeting at GMC Balayogi Auditorium, in New Delhi on Tuesday —ANI

Trade deal with US a 'big decision', says Modi

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today said the India-US trade deal is a "big decision" which will benefit everyone in the country, and asserted that his government always works for the nation.

The PM was addressing the NDA Parliamentary Party's meeting.

NDA members congratulated Modi for the trade deals with the EU and the US, saying it would strengthen Indian exporters and entrepreneurs.

India and the US have agreed to a trade deal under which Washington will bring down the reciprocal tariff on Indian goods to 18 per cent from 50 per cent.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said there is excitement about the deal in the country.

"There is excitement among the MPs that nine trade deals have been concluded under the PM's leadership. Trade deals have been signed with 39 countries. All these 39 countries are developed countries. This is historic," he said after the meeting. Modi also told NDA MPs that they should not be complacent with their win in various polls, including local bodies. —*PTI*

Bihar govt tables Rs 3.47L cr Budget for FY26

PATNA, 3 FEB

The Nitish Kumar government in Bihar on Tuesday presented a Rs 3.47 lakh crore budget, asserting that the state was making progress at a rapid pace registering an impressive estimated growth rate of 14.9 per cent in the current fiscal.

Tabling the budget in the state assembly, Finance Minister Bijendra Yadav thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the Centre's generous help to Bihar. He lauded the Chief Minister's "visionary" leadership focusing on an "inclusive growth".

"The size of the budget for the year 2026-27 is Rs 3,47,589.78 crore, which is 30,694.74 crore more than 3,16,895.02 crore in 2025-26. Fiscal deficit is likely to be around Rs 39,400 crore, which is 2.99 per cent of the state's GDP," the minister told the House.

"Bihar received many things in last year's Union budget, which included new airports, a makhana board and other food processing units. The state has been among the fastest developing ones, with its growth rate for 2024-25 expected to be around 14.9 per cent," the Finance minister said.

Yadav praised Kumar for embodying "five virtues of 'imaan, gyaan, vigyaan, armaan and samman', scripting the journey towards achieving "viksit (developed) Bihar". He informed members about the government plans to double the state's per capita income in the next five years. —*PTI*

Bihar Finance Minister Bijendra Prasad Yadav before Budget presentation in Patna, on Tuesday —PTI

Don-turned-MLA comes in cop car to take oath

Don-turned-politician **Anant Kumar Singh** was brought to the Bihar Assembly in a prison vehicle for getting sworn in as a member of the House. Anant Singh, the JD(U) MLA from Mokama, was arrested ahead of the Assembly polls last year in Bihar, in connection with the killing of a rival gangster.

Sunetra is Pune Guardian Minister

MUMBAI, 3 FEB

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister **Sunetra Pawar** was on Tuesday named the guardian minister of Beed and Pune districts, posts previously held by her late husband Ajit Pawar.

Sunetra Pawar has been sworn in as the deputy chief minister following Ajit Pawar's death in a plane crash at Baramati in Pune district last week.

According to sources, Sunetra Pawar has been appointed as the guardian minister of the two districts.

She had already been given the departments of excise, sports and minority welfare, while Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis will handle the finance portfolio.

Meanwhile, senior NCP leader Praful Patel has said he is not in the race to become the national president of the Nationalist Congress Party to replace the late Ajit Pawar.

In another development NCP legislator Amol Mitkari has demanded that the Maharashtra government's flagship Mukhyamantri Ladki Bahin Yojana be renamed after late Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar. —*PTI*

ED raids WB, Delhi in sand and coal smuggling

KOLKATA, 3 FEB

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) conducted simultaneous raids across various locations in West Bengal and Delhi on Tuesday, in connection with alleged sand and coal smuggling cases, according to official sources. The searches, involving central armed forces, targeted premises in Delhi, Kolkata, Asansol, Durgapur, and other parts of Paschim Bardhaman district from approximately 6.30am.

Among the locations searched was the residence of Manoranjan Mandal, the newly appointed officer-in-charge of Budbud police station in Asansol. A senior official stated, "The searches are linked to an ongoing investigation into illegal sand and coal trade." Mandal, who has yet to formally assume his post, was suspended last year over corruption charges while posted at Barabani police station and was later attached to the Asansol Police Branch. The agency also raided homes and offices of several sand and coal traders, including Prabir Dutta of KK Minerals in Durgapur's Sepco area, and his brother Amit Dutta. —*PTI*

Laddu row: CBI urges action against TTD officials over tender lapses

AMARAVATI, 3 FEB

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has recommended that the Andhra Pradesh government initiate action against senior Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) officials over alleged "deliberate omissions and failures" in framing and enforcing tender conditions that led to the supply of adulterated ghee used in making the Tirupati laddu.

In its findings, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) accused O Balaji, Financial Adviser and Chief Accounts Officer; AV Dharma Reddy, former additional executive officer; and Anil Kumar Singhal, former executive officer, of approving tender conditions without due application of mind. The SIT said these decisions compromised the quality of ghee procured by TTD.

"It is recommended to take suitable action against the above erring committee members and senior TTD officers," the SIT said in its letter to the State government.

According to the SIT, the lapses allowed inefficient private dairies, including Bhole Baba Organic Dairy Milk Pvt Ltd, Vyshnavi Dairy Specialities Pvt Ltd and Malganga Milk and Agro Products Pvt Ltd, to qualify for TTD tenders.

These firms subsequently secured contracts and supplied adulterated ghee to TTD between 2020 and 2023, the report said.

Recently, the Andhra Pradesh government transferred Singhal from his post as TTD executive officer following the controversy. —*PTI*

SC adjourns ED's plea against Didi in I-PAC raids

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

The Supreme Court on Tuesday adjourned till 10 February the hearing on an ED plea alleging obstruction by the West Bengal government, including Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, during its search operations at the I-PAC office and premises of its director Pratik Jain in Kolkata in connection with an alleged coal pilferage scam.

A bench of Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and NV Anjaria deferred the matter after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Enforcement Directorate, submitted that the state government has filed affidavits in the matter and sought time.

Banerjee is likely to appear before the Supreme Court on Wednesday in connection with her petition challenging West Bengal's the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, sources said.

Meanwhile, the WB CM called for the impeachment of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and sought to rally support from other parties on this issue. —Agencies

Israel plants 300 trees to mark 'Ek Ped Maa ke Naam'

NEVATIM, 3 FEB

Over 300 trees were planted in Moshav Nevatim, Israel, to celebrate Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Ek Ped Maa ke Naam' initiative alongside the Jewish festival of Tu Bishvat, an ecological awareness day. Organised by the Indian Embassy with Keren Kayemet LeIsrael and Moshav Nevatim, the event highlighted shared commitments to environmental sustainability, community engagement, and people-to-people ties. Key participants included JP Singh, India's Ambassador, Rami Rozen, Israel's Environmental Protection Director General, and Nir Zamir, Bnei Shimon Council Head, who stressed the enduring friendship between India and Israel. Nevatim, founded by Indian Jews from Cochin, also hosts the Indian Jewish Heritage centre and continues to celebrate its Indian Jewish roots. —*PTI*

Sabarimala gold case: ED grills Ex-TDB official

KOCHI, 3 FEB

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) questioned former Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) administrative officer Murari Babu on Tuesday regarding the Sabarimala gold 'loss' linked money laundering investigation in Kerala. The agency recorded Babu's statement under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). Recently granted bail, Babu was arrested by Kerala's SIT. The ED has also recorded the statement of another ex-TDB officer, S Sreekumar. Last month, searches were conducted. The ED revealed that it froze Rs 1.3 crore worth of assets of accused Unnikrishnan Potty and seized a 100gm gold bar from Chennai. The probe involves alleged misappropriation of temple gold, misrepresentation of artefacts, and financial irregularities at Sabarimala, including temple offering scams. —*PTI*

OVER INDIA-CHINA CONFLICT

RaGa authenticates ex-army chief's 'memoir'

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday authenticated a copy of an article in the Lok Sabha which cited former army chief MM Naravane's unpublished 'memoir' but it failed to end the impasse over the matter, leading to a brief adjournment.

With Gandhi insisting on raising the issue in the Lok Sabha, Chair Krishna Prasad Tenneti moved on to other Speakers and asked Harish Balayogi of the TDP, an NDA constituent, to speak on the President's address after three Opposition MPs refused to speak, showing solidarity with Gandhi.

As Balayogi spoke, opposition MPs raised slogans and the ruckus continued in the House, prompting the chair to adjourn it till 3pm.

Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi —PTI

As soon as Gandhi was asked to speak on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address, he cited the Speaker's ruling of Monday and authenticated the copy of the article.

"I have authenticated it," he said.

To authenticate a document, a member has to submit a signed copy of it, affirming that it is correct to the best of his knowledge.

Tenneti, who was chairing the House, asked him to table it and said "will examine it and get back".

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said the Speaker passed a ruling on the matter and after that Gandhi should not raise the issue repeatedly.

Gandhi insisted that he is the Leader of Opposition and takes objection to the term 'permission' when he has to speak.

A row had erupted in the Lok Sabha on Monday when Gandhi sought to quote from an unpublished 'memoir' of the former army chief on the 2020 India-China conflict. —*PTI*

MPS CAN QUOTE RELEVANT DOCUS: EXPERT ON RAHUL CITING 'MEMOIR'

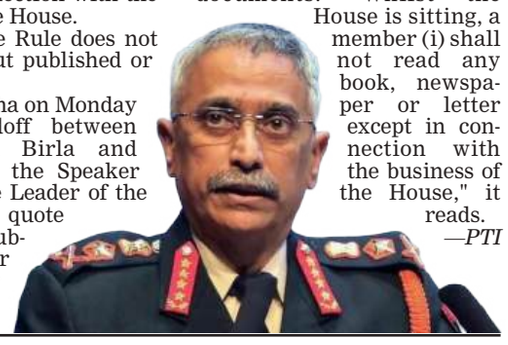
NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

Amid a controversy over Congress leader Rahul Gandhi quoting from an unpublished "memoir" of former Army chief **MM Naravane** in Parliament, an expert on Parliamentary procedures on Tuesday said Rule 349 bars members from reading from any book, newspaper or letter except in connection with the business of the House.

However, the Rule does not elaborate about published or unpublished.

The Lok Sabha on Monday saw a standoff between Speaker Om Birla and Gandhi when the Speaker disallowed the Leader of the Opposition to quote from the unpublished memoir of the former army chief on the 2020 India-China conflict citing a House rule.

He cited Rule 349 to disallow Gandhi from quoting from the retired general's unpublished memoir. "Rules to be observed by members in House" falls under Rule 349. The rule has 23 sub clauses dealing with a variety of issues. Sub clause one deals with members quoting from documents. "Whilst the House is sitting, a member (i) shall not read any book, newspaper or letter except in connection with the business of the House," it reads. —*PTI*



-PTI

India, Kyrgyzstan to hold joint war games in Assam

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

India and Kyrgyzstan will conduct their 13th bilateral military exercise, Exercise Khanjar, in Assam from 4 to 17 February. The exercise aims to improve interoperability between the special forces of both nations, focusing on joint urban warfare and counter-terrorism under the UN mandate. Held at Misamari, Assam, it will strengthen bilateral defence ties. The exercise, which began in 2011, alternates venues between the two countries, reflecting the deepening strategic partnership, with the previous edition held in Kyrgyzstan in March 2025. —*PTI*

Wankhede can file defamation suit in Mumbai

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

The Delhi High Court has allowed IRS officer Sameer Wankhede to file his defamation suit over 'The B***ds of Bollywood' series produced by Shah Rukh Khan's Red Chillies Entertainment in Mumbai. Justice Vikas Mahajan ordered the parties to appear before the civil court in Malad on 12 February. The court's decision follows a 29 January ruling that Mumbai courts have jurisdiction, as the alleged defamation occurred there. Wankhede claims the series aimed to damage his reputation, targeting him to settle personal scores. —*PTI*

Unnao rape case: Sengar's plea to be heard continuously

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday listed the appeal of former BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar for day-to-day hearing from 11 February, in connection with the Unnao custodial death case. Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma fixed the hearing at 12.30pm on 11 February. Sengar, who has been in custody since 13 April 2018, has challenged his 10-year conviction in the case linked to the custodial death of the Unnao rape victim's father. Earlier, the High Court rejected his plea for suspension of sentence, noting that despite having spent over seven years in jail, no grounds for bail were made out. Sengar was convicted by a Delhi court in 2018 and is also serving a life sentence in another rape case involving a minor. —*ANI*

AI jet's fuel control switch was replaced in 2024

AI to send FCS module to manufacturer for detailed check

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

After one of its pilots reported a defect in the functioning of a Dreamliner VT-ANX's fuel control switch, Air India has decided to send the switch module for checks to the original equipment manufacturer, sources said on Tuesday.

The particular module has clocked only 3,440 operational hours and it was put in the aircraft in 2024, the sources said. The life of the module is 20,000 hours. There was no official comment from Air India. Details about the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) of the fuel switch module concerned could not be ascertained.

On 1 February, one of Air India's Boeing 787-8 planes or Dreamliner VT-ANX had problems with the Fuel Control Switch (FCS) when the engine was started before take-off from London Heathrow.

Ground handling staffers stand near the grounded Air India Dreamliner on Tuesday —*PTI*

The pilot of the aircraft reported the defect after the flight landed in Bengaluru on 2 February, where it is grounded now.

After the incident, Air India is inspecting the FCSs in all its 33 Boeing 787s. So far, inspection of half the fleet has been completed and no issues have been found.

IThe DGCA said that on 1 February during engine start in London, on two occasions the crew observed that the fuel control switch did not remain latched onto the 'RUN' position when light vertical pressure was applied. "On the third attempt the switch latched correctly in 'RUN' and remained stable," the statement said.

In an aircraft's fuel control switch, the 'RUN' and 'CUT OFF' positions are used to start or shut down engines, respectively. —*PTI*

FRAUD CASE

SC: Don't arrest shaadi.com chief

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

The Supreme Court today granted shaadi.com founder Anupam Mittal and two others protection from arrest for two weeks in a fraud case alleged by an user of the matrimonial platform.

A bench of Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and N V Anjaria set aside a Telangana High Court order refusing to quash the proceedings against Mittal and sent the matter back to the HC for fresh consideration. The SC also asked Mittal to approach the high court for interim bail.

The case stems from a Hyderabad woman's allegation that she was defrauded of Rs 11 lakh by a man who used a fake profile on shaadi.com and that the platform failed to verify user details. "Since the quashing petition has not been decided on merits, we set aside the impugned order and sent the matter to the high court. It shall be dealt with by the high court on merits," the Supreme Court said.

"Meanwhile, the petitioner should approach the HC for interim relief. For a period of eight weeks from today, no steps must be taken against the petitioner," it added.

Advocate Nadkarni, appearing for Mittal, submitted that he was running a matrimonial site, which was just a matchmaker. —*PTI*

Punitive demolitions still in UP despite SC ban: Allahabad HC

PRAYAGRAJ, 3 FEB

The Allahabad High Court observed that punitive demolition of buildings continues in UP, despite the Supreme Court's November 2024 ruling that "bulldozer justice" is simply unacceptable.

Justices Atul Sreedharan and Siddhartha Nandan also asked the UP government whether demolishing a structure immediately after an offence depended on executive discretion.

the court fixed 9 February as the date for hearing bearing in mind the "overarching" nature of the case, spanning the right of the state to demolish a structure and the rights of its occupants under Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution.

In the 21 January order, the court said the respondents have sealed a commercial property registered in the name of Petitioner No. 3 as 'Indian Lodge', and a saw mill, the licence of which was renewed in the name of Petitioner No. 2 on 11 February 2025, and its renewal is pending.

-PTI

The petitioners feared that their properties have been marked for "destruction by mechanical means."

The bench was hearing a petition filed by Faimuddeen and others, who claimed that their relative, Aafan Khan, was booked under various sections of the BNS, POCSO, IT Act and the UP Prohibition of Unlawful Religious Conversion Act.

The UP government termed the petition "premature" and said the petitioners must respond to the notices issued to them. — *PTI*

CBI files Ankita Bhandari murder case

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

Following the Uttarakhand government's recommendation, the CBI's Delhi Special Crime Branch (Branch-2) has registered a case in connection with the September 2022 murder of Ankita Bhandari. The 22-year-old receptionist at Vanantra Resort, Rishikesh, was found dead in the Cheela Canal on 24 September, 2022. Resort owner Pulkit Arya, manager Saurabh Bhaskar, and Ankita Gupta have already been sentenced to life imprisonment.

The case gained widespread attention after viral audio and video clips suggested the involvement of a "VIP," allegedly linked to the wife of a former BJP MLA from Jwalapur. Following protests, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami recommended a CBI probe on 9 January. —ANI

Avoid delays in delivering judgements, says apex court

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

The practice of reserving judgements for months by high courts without making them public is an "identifiable problem" that must be eliminated, the Supreme Court said on Tuesday while highlighting the need to ensure timely delivery of justice.

Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi was hearing a plea that said the Jharkhand High Court orally pronounced a judgment dismissing a petition on 4 December 2025 and the verdict has not yet been uploaded.

The bench said the full judgment must be provided to the counsel by the end of next week.

Referring to the delay, advocate Mukul Rohatgi, who was appearing for the litigant, said, "It seems some kind of lip service is going on. This amounts to playing with the law."

The CJI referred to another prevalent trend, that is, in some cases arguments are heard and are then posted for directions.

He said he will raise this issue in his upcoming meeting with HC chief justices.

The bench, in its order, referred to the facts of the case and said, "The Jharkhand High Court pronounced the judgment on 4 December 2025, where the writ petition was dismissed. The judgement has not been uploaded yet. Let the full text of the judgment be provided to the counsel by the end of next week." — *PTI*

Bizman killed with helmet in Delhi's CP

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

A late-night outing in the heart of the city turned fatal for a 36-year-old businessman who died days after allegedly being struck repeatedly on the head with a helmet by food delivery partners after an argument. An only child, Shivam Gupta's death has left his family shattered.

A resident of east Delhi's Laxmi Nagar, Shivam had gone to the Connaught Place with a friend on 2 January to attend a party. An altercation later broke out between him and some delivery partners near E-Block, close to Rajiv Chowk Metro Station, during which he was attacked by around three men.

A PCR call received around 1.30 am on 3 January informed the police about an injured man lying unconscious on the road, bleeding. Shivam was rushed to Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Hospital nearby, where doctors found multiple hematomas, a pool of clotted blood, and declared him unfit to give a statement.

Shivam's father, Anil Kant Gupta, said his son had left home on the evening of 2 January to attend a party.

"I got a call from police saying that my son was admitted in hospital," Shivam's father, Anil Kant Gupta, recalled.

-AI

He said Shivam was shifted to Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital on 4 January, underwent surgery on 5 January and died on 19 January.

Two men were apprehended, the sources said, adding that an investigation is on. — *PTI*

KIN FORCED TO COVER BODY POST AUTOPSY

NOIDA, 3 FEB

The Gautam Buddh Nagar Chief Medical Officer (CMO) has ordered an inquiry after a video went viral on social media purportedly showing the family of a deceased person wrapping his naked body after autopsy at a mortuary in Sector 94 here, officials said on Tuesday.

In the video, a man is heard alleging that the family was forced to wrap the body themselves as the mortuary staff refused to provide cloth. He also claimed that no staff was present to assist the family and they were asked to pay money.

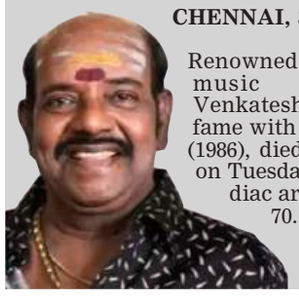
Sources, said the deceased, identified as one Rachit, allegedly committed suicide.

The family was allegedly asked to pay money by the mortuary staff and, on refusal, were told to wrap the body themselves. They were also even denied cloth to cover the body, sources said.

The video triggered outrage on social media, with users questioning the functioning and sensitivity of staff at the postmortem facility.

Taking cognisance of the matter, Gautam Buddh Nagar CMO Dr Narendra Kumar directed the nodal officer of the mortuary to conduct a detailed investigation. — *ANI*

Malayalam maestro SP Venkatesh passes away



CHENNAI, 3 FEB

Renowned South Indian music director SP Venkatesh, who rose to fame with Rajavinte Makan (1986), died at his residence on Tuesday following a cardiac arrest. He was aged 70.

Also known as Sangeetharajan, Venkatesh was the son of mandolin player Pazhani.

He began his film career as a guitarist under Vijay Bhaskar in 1971 and debuted as a Malayalam music director with Janakeeya Kodathi (1985).

Venkatesh won the Kerala State Film Award in 1993 for Paithrukam and Janam and was celebrated for his collaborations with Mohanlal and Mammootty. His memorable works include Kilukkam, Minnaram, Sphadikam and Johnny Walker. — *PTI*

Porsche crash victim's kin says bail unjustified

UMARIA, 3 FEB

The family of one of the two engineers killed in the 2024 Pune Porsche accident has expressed disappointment over the Supreme Court granting bail to the three accused of aiding the tampering of blood samples after the incident, saying it sends a wrong message. The case relates to the incident on 19 May 2024, when a Porsche car allegedly driven by a drunk 17-year-old boy fatally knocked down two IT professionals, Anish Awadhiya and Ashwini Koshta, in Pune.

The Porsche car which was involved in the Pune mishap -ANI

The Supreme Court granted bail on Monday to Amar Santish Gaikwad (alleged middleman), Aditya Avinash Sood and Ashish Satish Mittal (parents of two other juveniles in the car), observing that parents are responsible for such incidents involving juveniles.

Sood and Mittal are accused of conspiracy to replace the blood samples of their children.

Mittal is a friend of the main accused's father, while Sood is the father of the boy who was seated on the rear seat of the car. Gaikwad is a middleman who had allegedly taken Rs 3 lakh to "manipulate" the blood report. —*PTI*

GOVT WASHES OFF HANDS

Cough syrups taken 'sans prescription'

JAIPUR, 3 FEB

Responding to the questions about the cough syrup-linked deaths, the Rajasthan government said in the Assembly that the deaths were caused by "overdosing and comorbidity," and as the medicine was taken without medical advice.

In September-October 2025, at least 24 children died in various states after consuming the cough syrup, which was found to contain a highly poisonous compound that causes renal failure.

A sharp exchange was witnessed in the assembly after the opposition raised the issue during the Question Hour.

Meanwhile, the Congress sought to corner the government over lower expenditure under the free medicine scheme, despite an increase in OPD footfall, and over reports of deaths of children allegedly linked to the consumption of a government-supplied cough syrup in October 2025.

In September-October 2025, 24 children died in various states after consuming the cough syrup

The cough syrup contained a highly poisonous substance which caused renal failure -PTI

Congress MLA Harimohan Sharma and Leader of Opposition Tikaram Jully raised questions on these issues.

Responding to them, Health Minister Gajendra Singh Khimsar said the syrup in question was not taken as per the advice of government doctors.

"If medicines are given as per the prescription of doctors and deaths occur, then the responsibility lies with the doctor and the government. But if someone brings medicines from outside and deaths occur, neither the doctor nor the government is responsible," he said.

Khimsar said that not many deaths had occurred in the cough syrup case. —*PTI*

Boy dies months after consuming cough syrup

BETUL, 3 FEB

A four-year-old boy from Madhya Pradesh died at AIIMS Nagpur, months after he fell critically ill and slipped into a coma after allegedly consuming Coldrif cough syrup, officials said.

In September-October 2025, at least 24 children died after consuming the cough syrup, which was found to contain a highly poisonous compound that causes renal failure.

Harsh, from Tikabarri village in MP's Betul district bordering Chhindwara, had been in coma for four months and was admitted to the ICU of the hospital, where he died during treatment on Sunday, an official said on Monday.

Betul's Chief Medical and Health Officer (CMHO), Dr Manoj Hurmade, confirmed the child's death and said the post-mortem examination was conducted in Nagpur on Monday, and the body was handed over to the family.

The exact cause of death can be ascertained only after the post-mortem report comes, he said. — *PTI*

-PTI

Delhi AIIMS docs' gadget can do scans in Antarctica

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

At AIIMS Research Day 2026, Prof (Dr) SH Chandrashekhara of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, demonstrated a telerobotic ultrasound system that enables doctors in the city to perform real-time diagnostic ultrasound scans in far way places like Antarctica.

Using an advanced telerobotic ultrasound system, the clinician remotely controlled a robotic arm holding an ultrasound probe, demonstrating the feasibility of expert radiological care across extreme geographical and climatic barriers.

The system uses a robotic arm controlled remotely to position the ultrasound probe, while images are streamed back to the clinician in New Delhi. —*PTI*

SAVE THE TREES

Environmental activists, villagers, students, traders, saints and political leaders joined the 'Save Khejri Movement' in Rajasthan's Bikaner on Monday and Tuesday, protesting the proposed felling of 50 lakh Khejri trees for solar power projects. Protesters allege that thousands of Khejri trees are being cut and secretly buried, with a large number axed in Bikaner and surrounding areas to clear land for mulitple projects. Supporters also came from Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. Over 363 saints and activists have begun an indefinite hunger strike, many wearing blindfolds to symbolise the government's indifference ***PHOTO: PTI***

INDIA-US TRADE AGREEMENT: An explainer

US President Donald Trump has said that India and the US have agreed on a trade deal under which Washington will bring down reciprocal tariff on Indian goods to 18 per cent from the current 25 per cent.

The announcement is important as the US has imposed a steep 50 per cent tariffs on Indian goods entering American markets from August 27, 2025. Here is a list of key pointers to explain the announcement:

TARIFF DEFINITION

These are customs or import duties which a country imposes on goods bought from other nations. An importer has to pay this duty to the government. Normally, companies pass on these taxes to end users or consumers. Import duty makes goods expensive in the importing country. Besides, a few other factors also play a role in this. For example, duty on India's competitor nations such as Bangladesh (20 per cent), Vietnam (20 per cent) and Thailand (19 per cent); and quality and standards of items.

US' TARIFFS ON INDIA

In August 2025, the US announced to impose a 25 per cent tariff plus another 25 per cent punitive duty for buying Russia's crude oil and military equipment. These duties are imposed over and above the existing tariffs that the Indian goods are facing in the US.

The US has reduced the duty to 18 per cent. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that he was delighted that "made in India products will now have a reduced tariff of 18 per cent".

WHY US IS IMPOSING TARIFFS?

The US has alleged that it faces a significant trade deficit with India, blaming New Delhi for imposing high tariffs on American goods, which it says restricts US exports to the Indian market.

TRUMP'S ANNOUNCEMENT

"It was an Honor to speak with Prime Minister Modi, of India... We spoke about many things, including Trade...He agreed to stop buying Russian Oil, and to buy much more from the United States and, potentially, Venezuela.

This will help END THE WAR in Ukraine, which is taking place right now, with thousands of people dying each and every week! Out of friendship and respect for Prime Minister Modi and, as per his request, effective immediately, we agreed to a Trade Deal between the United States and India, whereby the United States will charge a reduced Reciprocal Tariff, lowering it from 25 per cent to 18 per cent. "They will likewise move forward to reduce their Tariffs and Non-Tariff Barriers against the United States, to ZERO. The Prime Minister also committed to "BUY AMERICAN," at a much higher level, in addition to over $500 BILLION DOLLARS of US Energy, Technology, Agricultural, Coal, and many other products," Trump said.

GAINS FOR INDIA

Labour-intensive sectors such as garments, leather and non-leather footwear, gems and jewellery, carpets and handicrafts may get a boost as high tariffs were hurting exports of these goods to the US.

BILATERAL TRADE

During 2021-25, the US was India's largest trading partner in goods. The US accounts for about 18 per cent of India's total exports, 6.22 per cent in imports, and 10.73 per cent in bilateral trade. In 2024-25, the bilateral trade touched USD 186 billion (USD 86.5 billion exports and USD 45.3 billion imports).

With America, India had a trade surplus (the difference between imports and exports) of USD 41 billion in 2024-25. It was USD 35.32 billion in 2023-24 and USD 27.7 billion in 2022-23.

In services, India exported an estimated USD 28.7 billion and imported USD 25.5 billion, adding a USD 3.2 billion surplus. Altogether, India ran a total trade surplus of about USD 44.4 billion with the US.

MAJOR PRODUCTS TRADED BETWEEN THE TWO

In 2024, India's main exports to the US included drug formulations and biologicals (USD 8.1 billion), telecom instruments (USD 6.5 billion), precious and semi-precious stones (USD 5.3 billion), petroleum products (USD 4.1 billion), vehicle and auto components (USD 2.8 billion), gold and other precious metal jewellery (USD 3.2 billion), ready-made garments of cotton, including accessories (USD 2.8 billion), and products of iron and steel (USD 2.7 billion).

Imports included crude oil (USD 4.5 billion), petroleum products (USD 3.6 billion), coal, coke (USD 3.4 billion), cut and polished diamonds (USD 2.6 billion), electric machinery (USD 1.4 billion), aircraft, spacecraft and parts (USD 1.3 billion), and gold (USD 1.3 billion).

SERVICES TRADE

As per estimates, USA's services imports from India amounted to USD 40.6 billion in calendar year 2024, with computer/information services imports at USD 16.7 billion and business management/consulting at USD 7.5 billion.

HIGH TARIFFS IN US

As per reports, the US imposes high duties on dairy products (188 per cent), fruits and vegetables (132 per cent), coffee, tea, cocoa and spices (53 per cent), cereals (193 per cent), Oilseeds, fats and oils (164 per cent), beverages and tobacco (150 per cent), Minerals and metals (187 per cent), and Chemicals (56 per cent). *—PTI*

SALAR ساہر

Vietnam Army preps for possible US war: Report

An internal Vietnamese military document has revealed deep mistrust of the United States, even after Hanoi elevated relations with Washington to their highest diplomatic level, exposing enduring fears within the Communist leadership of US aggression and political subversion.

The document, cited in a report released on Tuesday by The 88 Project, a human rights organisation focused on Vietnam, shows the country's military preparing for the possibility of an American "war of aggression" and explicitly describing the US as a "belligerent" power. Analysts say it highlights not just a contradiction in Vietnam's foreign policy, but a deeply ingrained anxiety about foreign-backed attempts to undermine Communist Party rule.

Central to those fears is the prospect of a so-called "colour revolution" — mass popular uprisings such as Ukraine's Orange Revolution in 2004 or the Philippines' 1986 People Power movement — which Vietnamese leaders believe could be encouraged or supported by the US.

Other internal documents cited by The 88 Project point to similar concerns over American motives

PREPARING FOR A 'SECOND INVASION'

The document, titled "The 2nd US Invasion Plan", was completed by Vietnam's Ministry of Defence in August 2024. It argues that in pursuit of "strengthening deterrence against China", the US and its allies are prepared to use unconventional warfare, political pressure and even large-scale military intervention against countries that fall outside Washington's strategic orbit.

Although the authors acknowledge that "currently there is little risk of a war against Vietnam", they warn that the US's "belligerent nature" requires constant vigilance to prevent Washington and its allies from creating a pretext for invasion.

Vietnamese military analysts describe what they see as a steady escalation of American strategy across three administrations — from Barack Obama, through Donald Trump's first term, to Joe Biden — marked by an expansion of military and strategic partnerships across Asia aimed at "forming a front against China".

PUBLIC TIES, PRIVATE SUSPICION

These internal assessments contrast sharply with Vietnam's public diplomacy. In 2023, President Joe Biden signed a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with Hanoi, placing the US on the same diplomatic footing as China and Russia as one of Vietnam's most trusted partners, in a relationship described as being grounded in "mutual respect".

The US military presence in Vietnam peaked in April 1969, with 5,43,000 military personnel stationed in the country *—WIKIPEDIA*

Yet the defence document suggests Vietnamese planners believe the US sees Vietnam not only as a partner, but also as a target for ideological transformation. While Washington regards Hanoi as "an important link", the document claims the US seeks to "spread and impose its values regarding freedom, democracy, human rights, ethnicity and religion" in order to gradually change Vietnam's socialist system.

Vietnam's Foreign Ministry did not respond to requests for comment on the report. The US State Department declined to address the document directly, instead emphasising that the partnership "promotes prosperity and security for the United States and Vietnam".

DIVISIONS WITHIN HANOI

Experts say the documents offer rare insight into internal debates within Vietnam's leadership. Nguyen Khac Giang, a researcher at Singapore's ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute, said they reflect longstanding tensions between reformist officials and conservative, military-aligned factions of the Communist Party.

"The military has never been too comfortable moving ahead with the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with the United States," he said.

Those tensions spilled into public view in June 2024, when an army television programme accused the US-linked Fulbright University Vietnam of fomenting a colour revolution. The Foreign Ministry later defended the university, which both governments have highlighted as a symbol of closer ties.

Zachary Abuza, a professor at the US National War College, said the Vietnamese military still has "a very long memory" of the war with the US that ended in 1975.

CHINA, TRADE AND STRATEGIC BALANCE

The papers portray China less as an existential threat than as a difficult but manageable rival. Despite tensions over territorial claims in the South China Sea, analysts say Beijing is seen as unlikely to push Vietnam so far as to destabilise Communist Party rule.

China is Vietnam's largest two-way trading partner, while the US is its biggest export market, forcing Hanoi into a delicate balancing act between economic dependence and strategic suspicion.

Trust has also been undermined by past US decisions, including cuts to USAID under Trump's first administration, which disrupted projects addressing the legacy of the war, such as cleaning up Agent Orange contamination and unexploded munitions.

TRUMP'S RETURN: REASSURANCE AND RISK

Under Vietnam's current leader, To Lam, who became Communist Party general secretary around the time the document was written, ties with Washington have continued to strengthen, particularly during Donald Trump's second term. Lam was reappointed last month and is expected to assume the presidency, consolidating power to a degree unseen in decades.

Trump's family business has since broken ground on a USD 1.5 billion golf resort and luxury real estate project in northern Vietnam, and Lam quickly accepted Trump's invitation to join a "Board of Peace" — a move seen as unusually swift given Hanoi's sensitivity to Beijing's reactions. *—PTI*

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Climate crisis and the govt's politics of who gets to live

In 2024, three members of the Galvan family were found dead in their apartment in Brownsville, Texas, days after a malfunctioning air conditioner left them exposed to extreme heat. Aged between 60 and 82, all three lived with chronic conditions including diabetes and heart disease, illnesses that impair the body's ability to regulate temperature and sharply increase vulnerability to heat stress.

No one came to check on them until it was too late. While the immediate trigger was equipment failure, a pathologist attributed the deaths to extreme heat interacting with chronic illness. Such cases are officially classified as "heat-related" when ambient temperatures exceed what the human body can safely tolerate.

Climate change is a clear contributing factor. As heatwaves become more frequent, intense and prolonged, ordinary failures in cooling, power supply or housing infrastructure are increasingly likely to turn vulnerability into fatal harm. The Galvans' deaths were not an anomaly, but part of a wider and predictable pattern.

Globally, climate-related deaths follow consistent social lines. Older people, those with pre-existing illness, people living in poverty, and those working outdoors are disproportionately affected. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimates that between 3.3 billion and 3.6 billion people – nearly half the world's population – are highly vulnerable to climate risks and have limited capacity to cope.

Vulnerability here is not simply about exposure to environmental hazards. Who is protected, and who is left at risk, depends on social conditions, infrastructure, public services and political choices.

Research across climate science, public health and the social sciences shows these patterns are well established. The evidence points to an uncomfortable conclusion: much of this suffering is preventable.

THE NECROPOLITICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Cameroonian historian Achille Mbembe uses the term "necropolitics" to describe how political systems come to treat some lives as more expendable than others. This does not imply an intention to kill, but rather a routine acceptance that certain groups will be exposed to harm.

Viewed through this lens, the Galvans' deaths were shaped not only by heat, but by structural inequality and gaps in social policy and infrastructure. The same logic is visible worldwide. Heatwaves in south Asia and the Middle East disproportionately kill elderly people and outdoor labourers. In sub-Saharan Africa, floods and droughts hit subsistence farmers hardest.

In the UK, air pollution is linked to around 30,000 deaths each year, with people from ethnic minority and low-income communities far more likely to live in the most polluted areas. These deaths are not random. They follow recognisable and persistent social patterns.

Older people, people living in poverty, and those working outdoors are affected the most by heatwaves *—PTI*

Necropolitics helps explain situations where political, economic and social arrangements leave certain populations consistently exposed to danger. Climate-vulnerable communities, extractive regions shaped by mining, and displaced populations all fall into this category. In the US, the political slogan "Drill, baby, drill!" has resurfaced as shorthand for prioritising fossil fuel extraction over emissions reduction, reinforcing these patterns of exposure.

Structural neglect, rather than individual behaviour, underpins the unequal distribution of harm. Yet vulnerability is not destiny. Heat offers a clear example. With early warning systems, targeted outreach and timely intervention, many deaths can be avoided. As epidemiologist Kristie Ebi puts it: "Those deaths are preventable … people don't need to die in the heat."

SLOW VIOLENCE, VISIBLE LIVES

Environmental scholar Rob Nixon describes climate harm as "slow violence": damage that accumulates gradually and often invisibly over time. Unlike sudden disasters, rising temperatures, drought and ecological degradation unfold quietly, disproportionately affecting those already at risk.

You cannot make a disaster film out of slow violence. Yet its toll is immense. The Galvans' deaths reflect this slow burn, as do lives lost to prolonged heat exposure, crop failure and environmental degradation across the globe. Those least responsible for greenhouse gas emissions, particularly in poorer countries, are often the most exposed.

Feminist theorist Donna Haraway offers another way of understanding this entanglement. Her concept of the "Chthulucene" emphasises the deep interconnections between humans, institutions, other species and ecosystems. Environmental harm, from this perspective, is inseparable from social life. Vulnerability emerges through everyday relationships between people, infrastructure and the natural world.

This dynamic is starkly visible in Vietnam's Mekong Delta, one of the world's most productive rice-growing regions. Rising sea levels and changing climate patterns are driving saltwater intrusion far inland, damaging farmland and threatening millions of livelihoods. By 2030, up to 45 per cent of the delta's agricultural land could be affected, destabilising local communities and global food systems alike.

A POLITICS OF LIFE, NOT DEATH

Environmental threats do not act alone. Political choices amplify or mitigate their effects. Neglect is not a neutral absence; it is a political condition that shapes who lives and who suffers.

Addressing this injustice requires a politics of care – one that recognises vulnerability as socially produced and demands equity, solidarity and accountability. That means alliances between affected communities, researchers who document harm, advocates who expose neglect and decision-makers under pressure to act.

There are signs of progress. Cities such as Ahmedabad in India are expanding heat mitigation and early-warning systems. Communities in the Mekong Delta are working with Vietnamese and international researchers to develop salt-tolerant crops.

Internationally, emerging ecocide laws seek to make large-scale environmental destruction a criminal offence, embedding responsibility into legal systems. *—The Conversation*

At least 30 killed in record Japanese snowfall

TOKYO, 3 FEB

Japan has experienced record-breaking snow, causing at least 30 deaths over the past two weeks. A 91-year-old woman was found buried under 300cm of snow outside her home. The Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's government has deployed troops to assist affected areas, with authorities warning of avalanches and snow falling from roofs. As of Tuesday, Aomori recorded 175cm of snow, more than double the usual, breaking a 40-year record of 181cm in 1986. Reports indicate at least 135cm of snow in several cities. Since 20 January, 30 people have died, including two swept away in Niigata. The meteorological agency warns of continued heavy snow from Arctic cold air. *—AGENCIES*

PHOTO: X

Not guily of rape: Norwegian Crown Princess' son

OSLO, 3 FEB

Marius Borg Hoiby, 29, son of Norway's Crown Princess Mette-Marit, faced trial on Tuesday on 38 charges, including rape, domestic violence, assault, and drug possession. Hoiby pleaded not guilty to four counts of rape, sitting impassively in court. Lead prosecutor Sturla Henriksboe stated, "He will be treated like any other Norwegian citizen." Hoiby's lawyer, Petar Sekulic, said his client denied guilt on rape and domestic violence charges but admitted to some lesser matters. The trial, scheduled until 19 March, follows Hoiby's detention on Sunday on suspicion of bodily harm, knife-wielding, and restraining order violation. His mother apologised for contact with Jeffrey Epstein. Notably, the monarchy remains popular with 70 per cent support. *-PTI*

After fuel leak, NASA eyes moon launch in March

CAPE CANAVERAL, 3 FEB

NASA plans to launch its new moon rocket in March, following fuel leak issues during a crucial test at Kennedy Space Centre. The leaks, which occurred during a fuel operation, delayed the launch and prompted a review of data and a second wet dress rehearsal. The four astronauts, including three Americans and one Canadian, will be moved out of quarantine before the next launch window. NASA has not set an official date but aims to resolve the issues, which include hydrogen buildup and recurring communication problems. The mission will test vital systems as the crew circles the moon but will not attempt lunar landing. *–PTI*

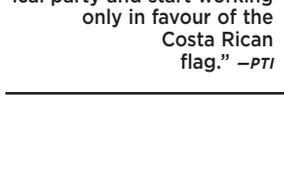


PHOTO: PTI

Conservative Fernandez to win Costa Rica polls

SAN JOSE, 3 FEB

Conservative populist Laura Fernández has won Costa Rica's presidency, securing a clear first-round victory and avoiding a runoff. With 96.8 per cent of polling stations reporting, she gained 48.3 per cent of the vote, while her closest rival, Álvaro Ramos, received 33.4 per cent . Fernández, the candidate of the Sovereign People's Party, aims to continue the policies of outgoing President Rodrigo Chaves. She expressed her desire to consolidate development and face global challenges, saying she hopes to "lower the flags of whichever political party and start working only in favour of the Costa Rican flag." *–PTI*

IRAN PREZ SEEKS 'FAIR' NEGOTIATIONS WITH US

Pak, Gulf nations likely to join talks brokered by Turkey

DUBAI, 3 FEB

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian said that he instructed the country's foreign minister to "pursue fair and equitable negotiations" with the US, the first clear sign from Tehran it wants talks as tensions remain high with Washington

The announcement marked a major turn for reformist Pezeshkian, who broadly had warned Iranians for weeks that the turmoil in the country had gone beyond his control. It also signals that the President received support from Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei for talks that the 86-year-old cleric previously had dismissed.

Writing on X, Pezeshkian said on Tuesday that the decision came after "requests from friendly governments in the region to respond to the proposal by the President of the United States for negotiations."

He said that the Foreign Affairs Minister will "pursue fair and equitable negotiations" provided that an environment "free from threats and unreasonable" expectations exists.

Turkey had been working behind the scenes to make the talks happen later this week, while US Mideast envoy Steve Witkoff is traveling to Israel to meet Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other Israeli security officials on Tuesday.

Pakistan said it has been invited to participate in the Iran-US talks, its Foreign Office said on Tuesday. Other countries, including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), are expected to participate in the foreign minister-level parleys as regional countries participate to give it a broader perspective for peace.

The US has yet to acknowledge the talks, but Trump has recently been insisting that Iran "wants to make a deal" as the US has deployed a massive carrier in the Gulf, flanked by destroyers. It remains unclear whether Trump would use the USS Abraham Lincoln.

"I'd like to see a deal negotiated," Trump said in the Oval Office. "We're talking to them, we're talking to Iran, and if we could work something out, that'd be great. And if we can't, probably bad things would happen." *—AGENCIES*

Iran President Masoud Pezeshkian *—ANI*

Global Day of Action on 14 Feb: Pahlavi

Iran's exiled crown prince Reza Pahlavi has called on Iranians abroad to join street demonstrations on 14 February which he called the "Global Day of Action in solidarity with Iran's Lion-and-Sun Revolution." On X, Pahlavi outlined six demands, including dismantling the regime's "machinery of repression", and recognising a transitional government to guide Iran. He said Munich, Los Angeles and Toronto would be major locations.

People embrance one another after the openeing of the Rafah border allowed Palestinians to reunite with their families *–PTI*

Only 30 people cross Rafah border on Day 1

CAIRO, 3 FEB

The Gaza Interior Ministry said that only eight people – patients and their companions – left Gaza as Israel opened the Rafah border crossing with Egypt and only 12 Palestinians entered the enclave.

Israeli officials had said 50 people would be allowed to pass through in each direction as the ceasefire with Hamas progressed. However, bureaucratic hurdles prevented Palestinians from crossing the corridor, and only 30 people crossed on Monday.

The Rafah border crossing is crucial as it would allow Palestinians in Gaza to access desperately needed medical care after Israel's bombardment of the enclave damaged or destroyed many of the hospitals.

About 20,000 Palestinian children and adults needing medical care hope to leave the devastated territory via the crossing, according to Gaza health officials. Thousands of other Palestinians outside the territory hope to enter and return home.

Before the war, Rafah was the main crossing for people moving in and out of Gaza. But it was closed in May 2024 after Israeli troops seized.

Crossing were set to continue on Tuesday and Israeli officials said that they may increase the number of people allowed through depending on the success.

Meanwhile, Israeli navy ship had fired on a tent camp, killing a 3-year-old Palestinian boy, Gazan officials said on Monday. *—AGENCIES*

Gen Z made me appoint specific ministers: Karki

KATHMANDU, 3 FEB

Nepal's interim Prime Minister Sushila Karki disclosed that leaders of September's Gen Z movement exerted significant pressure on her to appoint specific individuals as ministers. Addressing the national assembly for the first time since the dissolution of the house of representatives, Karki explained that the cabinet expansion was delayed because it was not led by the political party, requiring her to seek candidates from outside.

She said, "At that time, I had a strong pressure from the Gen-Z, to bring on people from Ge Z's. Names like Mahabir Pun and Kulman Ghising came up, and I had pressure to include them." She recalled that youth leader Sudan Gurung personally brought Pun into the government and that some ministers, including Ghising, left the cabinet to contest elections.

Karki, appointed on 12 September, 2025, after President Ramchandra Paudel's constitutional appointment, was tasked with leading Nepal until elections in March 2026. Her tenure marks Nepal's first female prime minister. *—PTI*

The attack damaged a Ukrainian Second World War memorial *–X@BEREZHNAT*

Russia bombs Ukraine's energy with 450 drones; Memorial damaged

KYIV, 3 FEB

Russia fired around 450 long-range drones and 70 missiles of various types at Ukraine's power grid, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Tuesday.

The barrage came a day before the two countries were due to attend US-brokered talks in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, to end the nearly four-year war.

At least 10 people were wounded in the bombardment of at least five regions, officials said. Private power company DTEK said it was the heaviest barrage of the electricity network this year.

"Taking advantage of the coldest days of winter to terrorise people is more important to Russia than diplomacy," Zelenskyy said.

1,170 apartment buildings in the capital Kyiv were without heating, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said, amid Ukraine's coldest winter in years.

The attack also damaged the Hall of Fame at the National Museum of the History of Ukraine in the Second World War, at the foot of the Motherland Monument in Kyiv, Ukrainian Culture Minister Tetiana Berezhna said.

The barrage came as NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte visited Kyiv in a show of support. *—PTI*

Temperatures were around -20°C in Kyiv as Ukraine reels in one of its coldest winters *–UKRAINE EMERGENCY SERVICE*

Clintons agree to testify in Epstein case

WASHINGTON, 3 FEB

Former president Bill Clinton and former secretary of state Hillary Clinton agreed late on Monday to testify in a House investigation into convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, days before the Congress was expected to vote to hold them in contempt. The couple had earlier indicated that they would not testify, defying a Congressional subpoena.

However, Republican Rep James Comer, the chair of the House Oversight Committee that is leading the probe, said that an agreement had not yet been finalised. The Clintons' attorneys had said that the pair would "appear for depositions on mutually agreeable dates and requested Comer not to proceed with contempt charges. Comer told press that "we don't have anything in writing".

If the vote takes place on the House floor, it would be the first time the Congress could hold a former president in contempt and advance the threat of prison time.

The documents related to the government's investigation of Epstein's alleged crimes that have been released to the public have mentioned Bill several times. While Bill, like a bevy of other high-powered men, had a well-documented relationship with Epstein in the late 1990s and early 2000s, he has not been accused of wrongdoing in his interactions with the late financier.

Meanwhile, the Justice Department said on Monday that it had that it had taken down several thousand documents related to the late financer and "media" that may have included victim-identifying information, saying they were made public due to "technical or human errors". *—PTI*

Bill Clinton, Ghislaine Maxwell, Jeffery Epstein *–DOJ*

Don't show Kirk's killing videos during case: Defence attorneys

Defence attorneys for the man charged with killing Conservative activist Charlie Kirk want the videos of the shooting at the Utah college campus to be blocked from being shown at the hearing. Kirk was allegedly shot dead while speaking to a crowd last year, and the videos of the shooting went viral. Accused Tyler Robinson's attorneys argue that the videos would have a highly biasing effect on potential jurors.

Trump to host Colombia Prez amid rising tension

WASHINGTON, 3 FEB

US President Donald Trump is set to welcome Colombian President Gustavo Petro to the White House on Tuesday for talks weeks after threatening military action against the South American country. US officials say the meeting will focus on regional security and counternarcotics.

Trump had earlier called Petro "a sick man who likes making cocaine and selling it to the US". Yet, on Monday, Trump said Petro, who has criticised the Republican over the military operation to capture Venezuela's leader Nicolas Maduro, "changed his attitude".

"Somehow after the Venezuelan raid, he became very nice," Trump told reporters.

Petro has called Trump an "accomplice to genocide". Ahead of his departure to Washington, he called on Colombians to take to the streets during the meeting. *—PTI*

Vatican's 'trial of the century' resumes

Cardinal Angelo Becciu *–x*

VATICAN CITY, 3 FEB

The appeals phase of the Vatican's "trial of the century" resumed Tuesday after setbacks for prosecutors that could affect the outcome of the case involving Cardinal Angelo Becciu and eight other defendants convicted of financial crimes in 2023.

The Vatican's Court of Cassation upheld a lower court decision throwing out prosecutors' appeal, meaning defendants can only see verdicts improved or overturned.

The ruling came as chief prosecutor Alessandro Diddi dropped objections and resigned amid controversy over WhatsApp chats suggesting bias in targeting Becciu. Defence lawyers argued the chats undermined the trial's credibility. Diddi denied wrongdoing but recused himself. The appeals court ruled his actions were valid. The case centres on the Vatican's 350 million euro London property investment.

Appeals will now focus on defence arguments, including Pope Francis' role and secret decrees granting prosecutors extraordinary investigative powers. *—PTI*

France drops US tech, including Zoom

PARIS, 3 FEB

In France, 2.5 million civil servants will ditch Zoom and Teams for a homegrown video conference system, as Europe seeks to reduce their use of digital services from US Big Tech companies and turning to domestic or free alternatives, pushing for digital sovereignty.

Soldiers in Austria are using open source office software to write reports after the military dropped Microsoft Office. Bureaucrats in a German state have also turned to free software for their administrative work.

The French government referenced some of these when it announced last week that civil servants would stop using video conference tools from US providers — including Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Webex and GoTo Meeting — by 2027 and switch to Visio, a homegrown service. *—PTI*

ONE ONLY 19 YEARS OLD

3 Indians held in Canada for shooting near house

OTTAWA, 3 FEB

Three Indian nationals have been arrested by Canadian police on an anti-extortion patrol and charged after bullets were fired at a home.

Harjot Singh, 21; Taranveer Singh, 19; and Dayajeet Singh Billing, 21, face one count each of discharging a firearm, and all have been remanded in custody until Thursday, the Surrey Police Service (SPS) said in a statement on Monday.

The suspects were arrested by patrol officers after an early morning report of shots fired and a small fire outside a home in Surrey's Crescent Beach neighbourhood.

On 1 February, 2026, the SPS members were patrolling in Surrey's Crescent Beach neighbourhood when reports came in of shots being fired and a small fire outside a residence near Crescent Road and 132 Street.

The three accused were arrested by SPS officers a short time later, the statement said.

The arresting officers were part of Project Assurance, an initiative that patrols neighbourhoods that have been targeted by extortion violence.

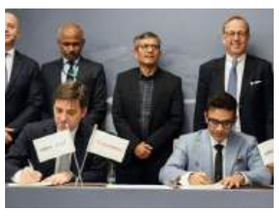
SPS's Major Crime Section took over the investigation, and the three men have now been charged with Criminal Code offences, it said.

All three have been charged with one count each of discharging a firearm into a place contrary to section 244.2(1)(a) of the Criminal Code.

All three have been remanded in custody until 5 February.

The SPS has confirmed they are all foreign nationals and has engaged the Canada Border Services Agency, it said. *—PTI*

Harjot Singh; Taranveer Singh; and Dayajeet Singh Billing *—X @surreyps*



—X/ADANI

Adani inks deal with Leonardo for helicopter mfg

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

Adani Group on Tuesday announced a strategic partnership with Italian major Leonardo to set up an integrated helicopter manufacturing ecosystem in India, boosting the 'Make in India' and defence self-reliance push. Adani Defence & Aerospace and Leonardo signed a memorandum of understanding in New Delhi to meet military requirements, focusing on AW169M and AW109 TrekkerM helicopters, along with phased indigenisation, MRO capabilities and pilot training. India currently has fewer than 250 helicopters, with demand estimated at about 100 helicopters annually over the next decade. Adani Defence Director Jeet Adani said the deal aims to build a unified aviation ecosystem, while CEO Rajvanshi cited armed forces demand for over 1,000 helicopters. —*PTI*

UPI transactions hit record high of Rs 230L cr till Dec

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

The government on Tuesday told the Rajya Sabha that Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions touched a record Rs 230 lakh crore in value in 2025-26 till December. Such significantly high figure reflects rapid digital payment growth. Replying during Question Hour, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said domestic UPI transactions rose from Rs 139 lakh crore in 2022-23 to Rs 230 lakh crore this fiscal so far. He said UPI has expanded overseas and is operational in eight countries. In a written reply, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the government, RBI and NPCI are enabling cross-border linkages, globally recognised. —*PTI*

Coal India Ltd upgrades pay scale of its executives

KOLKATA, 3 FEB

State-owned Coal India Ltd (CIL) has upgraded the pay scale of its executives up to the mid-level, with notional effect from 1 January, 2017, the company said in a regulatory filing. The financial impact of the pay revision will, however, be payable prospectively from 23 August, 2023, it said. According to the filing late on Monday, the total estimated financial impact of the upgradation for the period up to 31 December, 2026 is approximately Rs 3,400 crore. Coal India is the world's largest coal producer. It operates through multiple subsidiaries located across coal-bearing states. —*PTI*

—WIKIPEDIA

Tesla India rolls out EMI, exchange incentives

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

Tesla India on Tuesday announced new initiatives, including an EMI scheme and exchange incentives, to revive weak sales in the country. To attract buyers switching from petrol and diesel vehicles, the company is offering an exchange benefit of up to Rs 3 lakh. Customers can now purchase the Model Y with monthly instalments starting at Rs 49,000, with a down payment of Rs 6 lakh, significantly lowering the entry barrier for premium electric vehicles. Tesla began delivering the Model Y in India in September last year and sold 225 units in 2025, according to the data released by FADA. The company said owners could save up to Rs 20,000 a month on fuel and maintenance, reducing overall ownership costs. —*PTI*

Adani shares surge after India–US trade deal

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

Stocks of Adani Group companies surged sharply in early trade on Tuesday following the announcement of an India–US trade deal, boosting investor sentiment across the conglomerate.

Adani Enterprises Ltd led the rally, trading close to its 10 per cent upper circuit. Adani Green Energy and Adani Energy Solutions gained over 7 per cent each, while broader market strength lifted other group firms. Shares of Adani Ports and SEZ, Adani Power, Ambuja Cements and Adani Total Gas rose more than 4 per cent apiece.

Brokerage firm Jefferies flagged the Adani Group as one of the key beneficiaries of the bilateral trade agreement, citing the group's significant exposure to the US market.

It said sectors such as auto ancillaries, solar manufacturing, chemicals and textiles are also likely to gain from the deal.

Under the agreement, the United States has agreed to cut tariffs on all 'Made in India' products to 18 per cent, a move expected to strengthen bilateral trade ties and support export-oriented companies.

Meanwhile, Japan Credit Rating Agency has initiated ratings for three Adani portfolio companies, Adani Ports and SEZ, Adani Green Energy Ltd and Adani Energy Solutions Ltd, assigning long-term foreign currency ratings with a 'Stable' outlook.

Adani Ports and SEZ received an A- (Stable) rating, marking a rare instance of an Indian corporate breaching the sovereign threshold.

Adani Green Energy and Adani Energy Solutions were rated BBB (Stable), in line with India's sovereign rating.

—Agencies

Investors become richer by Rs 12.10L cr as markets rally

Seafood, textile stocks also saw upward trend

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

Stock investors' wealth surged by Rs 12.10 lakh crore on Tuesday, tracking a sharp rally in equities buoyed by the India-US trade deal.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 4,205.27 points or 5.14 per cent to hit the day's high of 85,871.73. It later ended at 83,739.13, up 2,072.67 points or 2.54 per cent.

The 50-share NSE Nifty zoomed 639.15 points or 2.55 per cent to settle at 25,727.55. During the day, it surged 1,252.8 points or 4.99 per cent to 26,341.20.

India and the US have agreed to a trade deal under which Washington will bring down the reciprocal tariff on Indian goods to 18 per cent from the current 25 per cent, US President Donald Trump said on Monday after a phone conversation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Cheering the rally in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms surged by Rs 12,10,877.45 crore to Rs 4,67,14,754.77 crore.

The trade deal also propelled a sharp rally in seafood exports, specialty chemicals, textile, leather, gems and jewellery and auto ancillary stocks.

From the seafood exports pack, Avanti Feeds and Apex Frozen Foods surged 20 per cent each, Zeal Aqua 10.58 per cent, Kings Infra Ventures 7.64 per cent, Mukka Proteins 5.01 per cent and Coastal Corporation 5 per cent.

Among speciality chemicals stocks, Aarti Industries surged 15.10 per cent, Gujarat Fluorochemicals soared 6.82.

Among textiles and leather, shares of Gokaldas Exports skyrocketed 20 per cent, Welspun Living 19.85 per cent, Garware Technical Fibres 17.07 per cent and KPR Mill surged 15.31 per, SP Apparels 14.19 per cent and Raymond Lifestyle 3.39 per cent.

Among gems, jeweller and auto ancillary stocks, shares of Goldiam International skyrocketed 20 per cent, Vaibhav Global 9.13 per cent, Kalyan Jewellers India 4.91 per and Titan 2.80 per cent.

A total of 3,304 stocks advanced while 981 declined and 137 remained unchanged on the BSE. —*PTI*

—AI

KEY SECTORS PERFORMANCE

Services	4.86%
Realty	4.79%
Power	4.79%
Utilities	3.92%
Capital goods	3.71%
Industrials	3.44%
Metal	2.85%
Healthcare	2.83%
Financial services	2.83%

- Cheering the rally in equities, the market capitalisation of Bombay Stock Exchange-listed firms surged by Rs 12,10,877.45 crore to Rs 4,67,14,754.77 crore

INDIA-US PACKAGE

Labour-intensive sector to gain from tariffs cut: Moody's

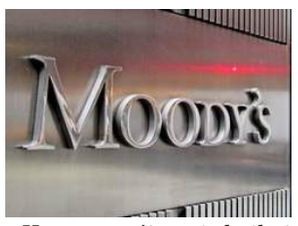
NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

Moody's Ratings on Tuesday said the reduction in US tariffs on most Indian goods is credit positive for labour-intensive sectors, including gems and jewellery, textiles and apparel, which dominate India's export basket.

India and the US have agreed to a trade deal under which Washington will cut reciprocal tariffs on Indian goods to 18 per cent from 25 per cent.

Moody's said the agreement should reinvigorate India's goods exports to the US, India's largest export destination, which accounted for about 21 per cent of total goods exports during the first 11 months of 2025.

"Lower tariff rates will be credit positive for labour-intensive sectors such as gems, jewellery, textiles and apparel, which rank among the top export sectors," the ratings agency said in a statement.



However, it noted that pharmaceuticals and consumer electronics, two other major export segments, are unlikely to see a direct impact because they were exempt from the higher tariffs imposed earlier by the US.

Moody's also flagged energy trade risks, saying India has reduced crude oil purchases from Russia in recent months but is unlikely to halt imports abruptly, as doing so could disrupt economic growth.

"A complete shift away from Russian oil could tighten global supply, raise prices and fuel inflation, given India's status as an oil importer," it said. —*PTI*

Rice exporters welcome trimmed tariffs

Indian rice exporters have welcomed the US decision to cut tariffs, boosting competitiveness as India heads towards record 149 million tonnes production in 2025-26. The Indian Rice Exporters Federation (IREF) said the move aligns India's tariffs with competitors like Thailand and Pakistan. Exports to the US remain strong despite earlier steep duties. KRBL's Akshay Gupta said the reduction will ease costs and support pricing competitiveness, helping India defend and expand market share in both basmati and non-basmati rice. —PTI

US TARIFFS CUT SET TO BOOST EXPORTS: INDUSTRY

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

Industry bodies on Tuesday hailed the finalisation of the India-US trade deal, which will see tariffs on Indian goods reduced to 18 per cent, boosting global competitiveness and expanding market access.

Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) President Rajiv Memani called it a "significant step forward in the strategic economic partnership" and emphasised deeper trade, and investment ties. Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry President Anant Goenka said sectors such as apparel, leather, gems and jewellery, and marine products are set to benefit, strengthening business confidence and bilateral engagement. PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Rajeev Juneja added that lower tariffs will reduce input costs, reinforce supply chains, and ease inflation, supporting manufacturing, and other sectors. —*PTI*

Reduced tariffs on India will aid mfg sector: FM

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday welcomed the reduction in US' tariffs on Indian goods, describing the development as a major boost for the 'Made in India' initiative.

"Good news for #MadeInIndia products. They will now face reduced tariff of 18 per cent. Thanking the leadership of PM @narendramodi and @POTUS for this development. People of our two large democracies stand to benefit," she said in a post on X.

The breakthrough follows a high-level telephonic conversation between PM Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump.

In a reciprocal move, India has committed to reducing trade barriers for American goods and significantly increasing imports across sectors, including energy, technology, and agriculture.

Following the trade agreement announcement, PM Modi said he was delighted that "Made in India products will now have a reduced tariff of 18 per cent". He said when two large economies and the world's largest democracies work together, it benefits the people and "unlocks immense opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation".

"President Trump's leadership is vital for global peace, stability, and prosperity. India fully supports his efforts for peace," Modi said on 'X'.

Trump said India will move forward to reduce tariffs and non-tariff barriers against the US to zero, adding New Delhi would buy American goods, including energy, worth more than USD 500 billion. —*PTI*

Rupee jumps 122P, highest in 10-&-a-half week

MUMBAI, 3 FEB

The Indian rupee emerged as the best-performing Asian currency on Tuesday, registering a gain of 122 paise or 1.33 per cent in a single trading session to settle at 90.27 (provisional) against the US dollar, after India and the US agreed to a trade deal.

Forex traders said the Indian rupee rose to the highest levels in two and a half weeks and rallied by around 1.5 pc on the trade deal between India and the US.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 90.30 against the US dollar, then gained some ground to touch an intraday high of 90.05 and a low of 90.52 against the greenback.

At the end of the trading session on Tuesday, the rupee was quoted at 90.27 (provisional) against the greenback, registering a gain of 122 paise from its previous close.

The rupee gained 44 paise to close at 91.49 against the US dollar on Monday, a day after the Union Budget 2026-27 was presented. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 97.57. —*PTI*

Silver, gold rebound sharply after 3-day rout

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

Silver and gold prices rebounded sharply in the futures trade on Tuesday following value buying by investors after a three-day rout in the domestic markets.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), silver for March delivery surged Rs 29,372, or 12.43 per cent, to Rs 2,65,633 per kilogram. The white metal hit a high of Rs 2,70,398 per kilogram, gaining as much as Rs 34,137, or 14.4 per cent. It had closed at Rs 2,36,261 per kg on Monday.

The rebound came after a brutal sell-off that saw silver nosedive 41 per cent from Friday to Monday, easing by Rs 1,63,632 per kg and wiping out substantial investor wealth. The fall came after silver touched a record of Rs 4,20,048 per kg on 29 January.

Gold prices also witnessed a strong recovery after a steep fall in the past three sessions. The April contract of the precious metal jumped Rs 7,923, or 5.5 per cent, to Rs 1,51,914 per 10g on Tuesday. In the past three sessions, gold lost nearly Rs 40,000, or 22 per cent, from its closing level of Rs 1,83,962 per kg on 29 January. —*PTI*

LARGEST MERGER EVER

Space and xAI merge in record $250B deal ahead of IPO

NEW YORK, 3 FEB

Elon Musk's SpaceX will merge with his artificial intelligence startup xAI, bringing two of his most high-profile private ventures under one roof as the combined entity continues preparations for a possible initial public offering (IPO) in the coming years.

Announcing the deal, Musk said the merger would create "the most ambitious, vertically-integrated innovation engine on (and off) Earth," combining Artificial Intelligence, rockets, satellite internet, direct-to-device communications and social media platforms.

He said the long-term goal includes launching data centres in space, arguing that Earth-based infrastructure may not sustain AI's growing energy and cooling needs.

People familiar with the transaction said SpaceX is valued at about $1 trillion and xAI at roughly $250 billion, making it the largest merger ever.

Under the terms, xAI investors will receive 0.1433 shares of SpaceX for each xAI share, while some executives may opt for cash priced at $75.46 per share. The combined company is expected to value its shares at around $527 each. SpaceX was last valued at about $800 billion during a recent insider share sale, while xAI was valued near $230 billion in November.

Tesla recently disclosed a $2 billion investment in xAI, and engineers across Musk's companies frequently collaborate.

The merger comes as SpaceX explores an IPO that could raise up to $50 billion and value the company at more than $1.5 trillion. Analysts expect regulatory scrutiny due to the contracts between SpaceX's defence and NASA. —*Agencies*

—AI

Industry leaders hail Budget

BENGALURU, 3 FEB

The Union Budget has raised capital expenditure (Capex) to Rs 12.2 lakh crore as the government is focused on infrastructure-led development, said Expenditure Secretary V Vualnam.

Vualnam noted that capital expenditure has a strong multiplier effect on economic growth.

Industry leaders, particularly in Bengaluru, welcomed the infrastructure push. Farook Mahmood, Chairman and Managing Director of Silverline Realty Pvt Ltd, said the Budget brought positive news for the City's real estate sector. He highlighted the government's allocation of Rs 5,000 crore for City Economic Regions (CERs), with Bengaluru being one of the seven selected cities. The move is expected to drive demand across residential, industrial and logistics real estate segments. Mahmood also pointed to the proposed high-speed rail corridor connecting Hyderabad and Bengaluru as a key development likely to enhance real estate prospects by improving regional connectivity. However, experts have also expressed disappointment over the absence of targeted measures for affordable housing. The current price cap of Rs 45 lakh for affordable homes was termed outdated.

Silverline Realty's Chairman Farook Mahmood, IndusSync's Co-founder Sandhya Srinivas and Kabelschlepp's MD Srinivas P Kamisetty PHOTO: SALAR

Srinivas P Kamisetty, Managing Director of Kabelschlepp India Pvt Ltd and a member of the Tsubaki Group, said the continued emphasis on infrastructure, Make in India and investments — particularly in AI-driven manufacturing — would strengthen domestic capabilities and enhance global competitiveness. He said the Rs 10,000 crore SME Growth Fund would improve access to credit and support the modernisation of industries.

Sandhya Srinivas, Co-founder of IndusSync, said the Budget underscores the importance of the machine tool industry as the backbone of India's manufacturing growth. She added that the focus on infrastructure, capital goods, MSME financing and advanced manufacturing would strengthen the industrial chain. —*Salar News*

Broadcasters may sue PCB over T20WC boycott

ICC mulls withholding Pak's annual revenue share of $35M

KARACHI/NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) faces the threat of legal action from official T20 World Cup broadcasters JioStar after deciding to boycott its 15 February match against India, an internal source has said. The International Cricket Council (ICC) has warned the PCB that the move could have serious financial and legal consequences.

Pakistan opted not to play the high-profile fixture in Colombo on instructions from its government, but has yet to formally communicate the reasons to the ICC. According to PTI, the ICC is considering withholding Pakistan's entire annual revenue share, estimated at around USD 35 million, to compensate the broadcasters for potential losses.

A PCB source said chairman Mohsin Naqvi sought legal advice before briefing Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif last week, but the board is now preparing for possible fallout. "If Pakistan does not relent, they could face heavy financial penalties and even a lawsuit from broadcasters," the source said, adding that any appeal to the ICC's Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) is unlikely to succeed, as the body does not hear appeals against ICC board decisions.

The PCB's position is further weakened by the fact that Pakistan is already playing all its World Cup matches at a neutral venue in Sri Lanka, a concession granted by the ICC. In contrast, while India has not received government clearance to tour Pakistan, it has continued to play Pakistan at neutral venues during ICC events and the Asia Cup, even after recent political tensions.

ICC has warned PCB of serious financial, legal ramifications of boycott —x

> I don't have any comment on players' security in India. We are going to the World Cup to just focus on what we are doing, we will let that stuff take care of itself
>
> —Mitchell Marsh, Aus skipper

The PCB has not yet submitted a written explanation to the ICC. The boycott is widely seen as a gesture of solidarity with Bangladesh following recent political developments there.

Sources say the PCB unsuccessfully sought backing from other member boards. Meanwhile, there is speculation that Naqvi — who is also Pakistan's interior minister — may reverse the decision after Bangladesh's general election on February 12. With two days still separating the polls and the India match, officials believe a late U-turn remains possible to avoid Pakistan being diplomatically and financially isolated. —*PTI*

Cummins skips World Cup to prioritise Test

Australia captain Pat Cummins has said his injury-enforced withdrawal from the T20 World Cup was driven by a desire to be fully fit for a demanding Test calendar later this year. The fast bowler was ruled out after failing to recover in time from a back injury sustained during last year's West Indies tour and was replaced by Ben Dwarshuis. He said scans showed he needed more recovery time and opted for caution given Australia's packed schedule, including Tests against Bangladesh, South Africa, New Zealand, India, England and an away Ashes. He hopes to return for the IPL and remains optimistic about Australia's World Cup prospects despite a poor Pak tour.

In-form India eye U-19 WC semis win

HARARE, 3 FEB

Unbeaten so far in the tournament, a confident and all-round India will be overwhelming favourites against Afghanistan in the semifinal of the ICC Under-19 World Cup here on Wednesday.

India are the most successful team in the history of the event, having annexed the title five times in 2000, 2008, 2012, 2018 and 2022, followed by Australia, who have won the trophy four times. On Wednesday, India will look to take one step forward towards a record sixth title.

India have had a great run in the tournament, having won all their five matches quite comfortably, including a 58-run win over arch-rivals Pakistan in the Super Six stage. Afghanistan too has had a fairly good tournament, winning four out of their five games, their only loss coming against Sri Lanka by four wickets. Going by form and overall composition, India will hold an edge over the Afghans in the knock-out game.Wicket-keeper batter Abhigyan Kundu has been the star performer for India with the bat as the left-hander has so far amassed 199 runs from five games with two half centuries to his name. Big-hitting opener Vaibhav Suryavanshi (196 runs in 5 matches with 2 fifties) too has been in good form but the team management would want him to convert his half-centuries into three-figure scores.

All-rounder Vihaan Malhotra (172 runs from 5 games) is the other Indian batter to look out for. He struck the lone century (109 not out) against Zimbabwe in group stages. —*PTI*

India has won all their five matches in the tournament comfortably. —x

Sabalenka stays at top while Novak Djokovic moves to third spot

MELBOURNE, 3 FEB

Carlos Alcaraz completed a career Grand Slam of singles victories with his Australian Open title, but there was some solace for the man he defeated, 24-time Grand Slam singles champion Novak Djokovic.

While Alcaraz maintained his No. 1 ranking on the ATP tour ahead of Jannik Sinner, Djokovic, who beat Sinner in the semifinals at Melbourne Park, moved up one place to No. 3. It is the first time the 38-year-old Djokovic has been inside the top three since August 2024.

On the WTA Tour, Aryna Sabalenka maintained her top ranking despite her loss in the final to Elena Rybakina, Rybakina moved up two places to third in the rankings, with Iga Swiatek in between at No. 2.

Three Americans followed in the WTA rankings -- Amanda Anisimova, Coco Gauff and Australian Open semifinalist Jessica Pegula. Elina Svitolina moved up two places to No. 10 after her semifinal loss to Sabalenka at Melbourne Park.

American Learner Tien was one of the biggest improvers on either tour by moving up five places on the ATP Tour to No. 24, a career high. The 20-year-old Tien, who lost to now No. 4-ranked Alexander Zverev in the quarterfinals, became the youngest American man to reach the final eight of a major since 2002. —*PTI*

Aryna Sabalenka celebrates winning against Marie Bouzkova. —PTI

Former England cricketer Tony Pigott dies at 67

LONDON, 3 FEB

Tony Pigott, ex-Sussex and England seamer, has passed away aged 67. After retiring, Pigott was Sussex's Chief Executive Officer from 1997 to 1999 and joined the ECB in 2005 as a Pitch Liaison Officer, according to the ECB website. He played one Test for England in 1984 against New Zealand at Christchurch, taking two wickets for 75 runs in 17 overs. He dismissed Bruce Edgar and Jeremy Coney, with Richard Hadlee scoring 99. Pigott scored 12 runs in the match. Over a 17-year first-class career, he claimed 672 wickets in 260 matches for Sussex and Surrey, scoring 4,841 runs with one century. From 2015-2018, he was among the ECB's inaugural Cricket Liaison Officers, supporting ground staff, umpires, overseeing pitches and conduct. —*ANI*

IOC warns of 'uncomfortable' change coming to Olympics

MILAN, 3 FEB

IOC President Kirsty Coventry has warned that upcoming changes to the Olympic sports program will be "uncomfortable" for some. During her first speech as IOC President in her historic role, Coventry outlined her vision for reform. She announced a review of over 450 medal events across more than 40 sports federations, initiated last June. Coventry emphasised the need for honesty about what works and what doesn't, saying, "We have to look at our sports, disciplines and events with fresh eyes to make sure we are evolving with our times." She added, "We will face difficult decisions and conversations — that's part of change," acknowledging these discussions may be "uncomfortable but essential". Coventry highlighted efforts to attract youth, citing urban sports like skateboarding, 3-on-3 basketball, and breakdance, which debuted in Paris 2024. She stressed on maintaining the Games' relevance for younger audiences, saying, "They reflect their values, their sense of authenticity and their search for something genuine." The review results, part of her "Fit For The Future" agenda, will be announced later this year. —*PTI*

—FREEPIK

EFI issues NOCs to riders for global events without trials

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

The Equestrian Federation of India (EFI) has come under scrutiny for issuing No Objection Certificates (NOCs) to four riders for participation in international competitions without conducting any selection trials, a move that has also raised conflict-of-interest concerns.

Documents accessed by PTI show that EFI issued NOCs on 2 January 2026, certifying four officers of 61 Cavalry as "active equestrian athletes" and permitting them to compete in international events in Europe under the aegis of the FEI. The riders cleared for overseas participation include Lt Col D Apurva, Maj Anant Rajpurohit, Maj Yashdeep Ahlawat and Capt Ahaan Kumar.

The NOC letter, signed by EFI Vice President (Technical) and acting President Col Jagat Singh (Retd), states that the federation has "no objection" to the officers representing Indian or Indian teams in international competitions in Europe.

According to EFI Secretary General Col Jaiveer Singh, the clearance was granted without any trials or transparent selection process, despite EFI having a Draft Selection Criteria dated 11 October 2023, which mandates objective assessment of athletes before international representation.

The issue has been further complicated by the inclusion of Maj Yashdeep Ahlawat, who is the son of EFI Executive Committee member Maj General (Retd) Deep Ahlawat, triggering allegations of conflict of interest.

Col Jaiveer Singh expressed strong reservations over the manner in which the NOCs were issued, saying that the move undermines governance norms in Indian equestrian sport. —*PTI*

RONALDO MISSES AL-NASSR MATCH AMID TRANSFER DISPUTE RUMOURS

RIYADH, 3 FEB

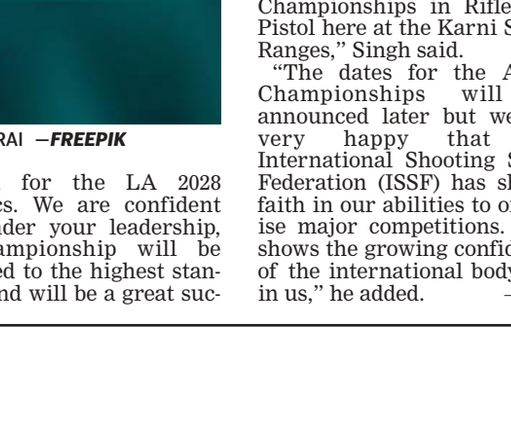
Cristiano Ronaldo was absent from Al-Nassr's Saudi Pro League match against Al Riyadh on Monday amid reports he is on strike over the club's lack of transfer activity.

Portuguese media outlet A Bola reported that the five-time Ballon d'Or winner is unhappy that Al-Nassr, which is backed by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, has not strengthened its squad as it challenges for the league title.

Heading into the game, Al-Nassr was second behind rival Al Hilal, which is also backed by the PIF and has been linked with Ronaldo's former Real Madrid teammate Karim Benzema.

Al-Nassr CEO Jose Semedo declined to comment, according to Saudi media.

The 40-year-old Ronaldo has scored 17 goals this season. —*PTI*



FanCode secures exclusive TV, digital rights for ISL

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

FanCode, a streaming platform, has secured the TV and digital rights for the Indian Super League (ISL), the All-India Football Federation (AIFF) announced on Monday. A statement from the AIFF said, "The interim Managing Committee of the Indian Super League (ISL) and the RFQ committee, on Monday, 2 February, 2026, selected the Broadcast and Production partners for the ISL 2025-26 season, which kicks off on 14 February.

The RFQ for the media rights was floated on 18 January 2026, with the bid submission deadline of 1 February 2026." With this, FanCode will deliver a digital-first viewing experience for ISL fans. Earlier, AIFF announced tentative fixtures, ESPN stated. —*PTI*

SC: Cricket bodies need people who can hold bat

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

The Supreme Court on Tuesday expressed displeasure over the management of sports bodies by non-experts, saying that cricket associations should be led by retired cricketers rather than individuals who "do not even know how to handle a bat".

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant, and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi refused to tinker with the Bombay High Court order that had stayed the Maharashtra Cricket Association (MCA) elections, originally scheduled for January 6, citing allegations of "nepotism and favouritism".

The bench was hearing pleas including the one filed by the MCA against the high court order.

During the proceedings, the CJI questioned the sudden surge in the MCA's membership.

Pointing to the records, the bench noted that the association had 164 members between 1986 and 2023, but saw a massive influx of new members immediately thereafter.

The CJI stressed if the association wanted to expand, those slots should have been reserved for renowned, retired international players. "This is one country where outstanding cricketers are there; those who have retired were the best in line," the CJI said. —*PTI*

HISTORIC FIRST

India to host shooting's Asian Olympic

NEW DELHI, 3 FEB

Marking a historic first for the country's shooting calendar, India will host next year's Asian Rifle/Pistol Championship in Delhi where eight quota places for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics will be up for grabs.

The eight slots in the Asian competition will be in addition to the 12 quota places that will be on offer in the World Cup (Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun) from 21 to 30 April next year, also to be held in Delhi.

The allotment of the Asian event was confirmed by the Asian Shooting Confederation in a letter to the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) President Kalikesh Singh Deo. The NRAI stated that the dates for the Asian qualifier will be finalised in due course.

Allotment of the Asian event was confirmed by NRAI —FREEPIK

"We congratulate National Rifle Association of India for winning the hosting rights of Asian Rifle/Pistol Championship 2027 where eight Quota Places will be distributed for the LA 2028 Olympics. We are confident that, under your leadership, the championship will be organised to the highest standards, and will be a great success," the letter, stated.

Speaking to PTI, NRAI secretary general Pawankumar Singh said it is a proud moment for the country. "This is the first time India will be hosting two Olympic quota competitions and we are very proud of that. We will host the ISSF World Cup Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun (April 21-30) in New Delhi and the Asian Championships in Rifle and Pistol here at the Karni Singh Ranges," Singh said.

"The dates for the Asian Championships will be announced later but we are very happy that the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) has shown faith in our abilities to organise major competitions. This shows the growing confidence of the international body has in us," he added. —*PTI*